

"A Penny a Story"

# The Black Cat

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"Up From The Sea"

IN THIS NUMBER

**The thrilling story  
of a man who was  
buried alive**



*The Cleverest Short Story Magazine in America*





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# The Black Cat

## Up From the Sea

BY NORVELL O. TINKER

*This is a truly remarkable story of the underworld. "Rags," a fence for thieves, whose sole redeeming trait is his loyalty, exacts a shocking penalty for the death of a woman of his world who befriended him.*



S the great clock in the tower of Saint Edward's Cathedral boomed upon the night air, its three solemn, measured strokes, a cloud, floating idly by, allowed the light of the full moon to sift through the single grimy window of the garret where Rags lay sleeping. Its pallid rays descended upon the bed, bringing into ghostly relief that colorless face with its wide, thick-lipped mouth; flat, bridgeless nose; huge ears that spurned the skull from which they sprang; and a snarl of coarse red hair growing far forward on the low retreating forehead.

As the light rested on his face, the sleeper stirred uneasily, woke with a start, then sat bolt upright. The dull pale-blue eyes blinked stupidly, then stared with superstitious fear, into the dark corners of his garret. He had often heard that sleeping in the moonlight presaged the coming of death, so, hastily shifting himself to the shadowy portion of the bed, he sat in shivering dread of some impending evil.

Suddenly the silence of the house

was broken by a low, bubbling moan. Beads of perspiration stood on his forehead; he shook with an ague of fear. The uncanny sound was repeated, and it slowly penetrated the dull brain that it came from the room below where Mag slept.

Ever since that night, five years ago, when "Handsome Mag" had rescued him, numb with cold and hunger, from the doorstep of the Bleeker Street house, he had been the willing slave of this handsome, dashing woman of the criminal world. She had taken him in, fed and clothed him, and made him a member of that band of expert diamond thieves, of which she was the leader, and whose operations had puzzled the New York detective bureau for ten years.

Often the patched clothing of Rags concealed thousands of dollars worth of gems, while detectives sought in vain for evidence among the prosperous appearing individuals of the world of thievery. It was Rags's duty to carry the "swag" until the keenness of the chase abated. His evident low order of intelligence and stupid expression were his best safeguards; for what officer would waste time searching for diamonds on a brute



whose mentality was little higher than that of an ape?

Rags's one pre-eminent characteristic was loyalty to his benefactress. Her word was a law he obeyed to the letter, regardless of consequences. Her cuffs and curses he bore without complaint; while a smile, a kind word, an encouraging look, made his heart glow with pleasure. He worshipped her as a dumb brute its master—willing at all times to sacrifice his life in her defense. So now, the thought that she had come to harm thrilled him as nothing else could do. Gone were his fears of the moonlight, and the evil things that lurked in the shadows of his garret. His brain held only one thought—the avenging of any injury done to his idol.

Thrusting a hand under his pillow, he drew forth a long, tapering knife, and stepping lightly to the floor, stole out of the garret and down the stairs with the stealth of an Indian. He paused at the door below and listened intently. From within came again that low, gurgling moan.

Without further hesitation, Rags pushed open the door and stood transfixed with horror. Upon the floor, in the moonlight, lay "Handsome Mag," the bosom of her night-dress stained with blood. Dropping his knife, Rags rushed to the side of the woman.

"Who done it, Mag?" he cried hoarsely.

There was no reply, and Rags, wild with fear, dashed to the table, poured out a glass of whiskey and forced some of it down Mag's throat. With a choking cough, the woman roused from her stupor, and languidly open-

ed her eyes.

"Is—that—you—Rags?" she asked haltingly.

"Yes, it's me," he answered. "Who done it, Mag?"

The woman's lips moved feebly, and Rags bent low to catch the words: "Jerry—stabbed me—in the breast—and—swiped the swag. I'm—a goner."

"Naw, you ain't," he protested, seizing the glass of whiskey and holding it to her mouth. The woman closed her lips and pushed it away.

"It's no use. I—know."

For a moment she was silent, then the black eyes opened, gleaming with hate.

"Rags—promise me—you'll get him."

"I promise," he answered harshly.

"Hold up—your right hand—and swear it," she commanded.

Rags held high his long, bony hand, and the tears on his cheeks glittered in the moonlight as he lifted up his face and swore in a voice choked with grief and anger: "I swear to kill him—so help me God—if I die a-doin' it."

A smile of satisfaction curved the beautiful lips. "Good—old—Rags," she murmured.

Her respirations grew so short, the movements of her chest so slight, she seemed scarcely to breath at all.

Suddenly the black eyes flew open wide; she raised herself upon one elbow and pointing into the darkness, cried: "Jerry—I'll be waiting—for you—in Hell."

There was a thud on the floor, and the stained soul of "Handsome Mag" had gone to its judgment.



For five minutes Rags sat motionless, stunned into inactivity by the magnitude of the blow. He was aroused by a faint sound behind him, and turning his head, saw Jerry stealing upon him with upraised arm. Rags sprang for his knife—but too late. The loaded club descended upon his forehead with a dull, sickening sound; his arms fell to his sides; he swayed drunkenly for a moment; then fell with a crash across the body of the woman.

Rags opened his eyes in absolute darkness and silence—not a ray of light greeted his vision; not a sound, his listening ear. He shivered with cold, and his head ached frightfully. When he attempted to raise his hand, it came into abrupt contact with some hard substance immediately above him. Feeling to the sides and beneath him, his groping fingers encountered other boards. He seemed to be in some kind of a wooden box that just fitted his body. By moving his feet and hands around, he found it narrower at both ends than in the middle. This puzzled him. Narrowed at both ends! Why, that was like a coffin! His groping fingers stopped abruptly, and he lay still. The darkness, the silence, the cold, and this coffin-shaped box, could mean only one thing—he was buried! The police had evidently found him apparently dead, and the public undertaker had hurried his body to the potter's field.

Buried alive! The fearful thought pierced his brain like a knife. A scream of horror burst from his lips; he jerked himself up; his head came

into violent contact with the top of his prison, and he fell back, stunned by the blow. Frantically he beat the immovable walls of his coffin with feet and fists, alternately calling for help, cursing and trying to pray. Streams of perspiration poured from his body; the air grew stifling; the muscles of his chest strained themselves to the utmost in search of life-giving oxygen; he knew he was dying—smothering to death. A frenzy of rebellion seized him; he kicked furiously, tore at the wooden barriers with bleeding fingers, and cursed with all the foul oaths his companions had taught him; then, sinking back exhausted, merciful oblivion claimed him.

How long he remained unconscious, he did not know. His first sensation was that of a draught of air blowing on his face. It was musty air, rank with the stench of decaying vegetation, yet Rags's thirsty lungs drank it in great gulps. The bluish tinge of suffocation left his lips and fingers, the reviving heart again pumped blood to the stupid brain, and Rags slowly opened his eyes. For a moment he lay still, staring with wide eyes into the impenetrable blackness; then the silence of his narrow chamber was rent by peal upon peal of ghoulish laughter.

Something had snapped in poor Rags's brain and he was mad! mad! He mumbled incoherently to himself, talked with imaginary companions, beat his feet against the boards of his prison, and laughed in maniacal glee. He discovered he could not strike the foot of his coffin with his feet and it aroused within him a child-



ish anger. Sliding toward the foot of the box till his knees were bent as much as the narrow space would admit, he kicked viciously at the foot board, and paused in surprise as both feet plunged through a hole.

This discovery excited his curiosity and awakened in his disordered brain, the instinct of self-preservation. Ceasing for a time his mad ravings, he hitched himself along till finally his whole body slipped through the opening and he slid downward into three feet of mud and slime. He seemed to be standing in a tunnel, long forgotten and half filled with mud and weeds. Some distance away, he perceived a faint light and started toward it. As he floundered forward through the oozy substance, muttering and laughing in his madness, he reached out to steady himself, and something smooth and clammy glided from out of his grasp. He seized the reptile by its tail and flung it violently against the side of the tunnel as he shrieked:

"I got you that time, Jerry!"

When an army of fierce rats pressed around him, eager for a feast, he pelted them with handfuls of mud; and as they ran squeaking in fear, the tunnel reverberated with his shouts of laughter.

At last he stood at the mouth of the underground passage, and gazed on the softly-sobbing, moonlit waters of the sea. Turning, he saw a fisherman bailing water from a boat drawn upon the beach; and Rags, after a moment's speculative survey of the scene, ran swiftly toward him.

The fisherman, hearing the crunch of gravel under his feet, turned his

head and gave one startled glance at the rapidly advancing figure dressed in burial clothes and covered with the filth and slime of the tunnel; then, dropping his tin bucket, he fled precipitately up the beach, calling on all the saints for protection.

Without paying any attention to the frightened man, Rags pushed the boat into the water, sprang in, and seizing the oars, rowed madly out to sea, while curses, snatches of ribald songs and shouts of demon laughter echoed across the water as he disappeared from sight.

Far out in the bay, a huge vessel, agleam with lights, bore down upon him, but Rags either did not see it or his disordered brain was unable to comprehend the danger. There came a crash; the frail boat was crushed to splinters, and Rags was in the water, battling desperately with the waves. Some negligent sailor had left a rope trailing over the stern of the vessel. It touched Rags's hand; instinctively he clutched it and drew his head out of water.

Among the crowd of passengers aboard the new American Line steamer *Magnificent*, on her maiden voyage to Havre, was a couple registered as Mr. and Mrs. Vincent Angelus of Boston. The woman was of the small blonde type, with a clear complexion, and eyes blue and guileless as those of a child. The man was a tall, handsome, well-groomed person, who radiated an air of wealth and refinement. Both were quiet in dress and manner. The one distinguishing feature of Mr. Vincent Angelus was his eyes. These were steely gray, and so cold in ex-



pression that when you met his gaze, the chilling effect of it lingered in your memory, and you found yourself wondering if such a man could really possess a soul.

By the time the *Magnificent* reached the lower bay, night had come, and on the great ship all was light and laughter. From the ball-room floated the strains of orchestral music accompanied by the tread of many dancing feet, while groups of passengers dotted the decks or strolled around for exercise.

On the forward part of the main deck, an admiring audience surrounded a tanned, grizzled veteran of the sea. A pretty young girl leaned eagerly forward.

"Please tell us another story, Mr. Waters—a real creepy, shivery one."

The big mate laughed indulgently.

"Bosh!" exclaimed a dyspeptic-looking individual, "I never took any stock in these cock-and-bull mystery tales of the sea. They're simply sailor yarns spun for the entertainment of the credulous. Don't you think so, Mr. Waters?"

The mate's face sobered as he answered slowly: "I can't agree with you, sir. Even allowing that sailors are possessed of an unusual degree of superstition and imagination, I contend that there still remain numbers of mysterious, uncanny happenings at sea for which no satisfactory explanation can be offered. I'll mention a case in point.

"Nearly twenty years ago, when I was younger and more reckless than now, I was captain of a three-masted schooner engaged in the Chinese opium trade. One day we were lying

in the harbor of Hongkong, when a Frenchman came aboard and asked for passage. We never carried passengers and I was about to send the fellow on his way in short order, when he shook a roll of big yellow bills under my nose.

"Well, business hadn't been very good, and I needed the money. Consequently I pocketed his roll, and put him in the mate's quarters. He was a little fellow, quick and nervous in manner, and I took a dislike to him from the beginning. I couldn't figure out why a man with money preferred a slow, pitching, rolling schooner to a comfortable steamer, unless to escape detection for some crime. However, it was none of my business to inquire into his past and, as I had been well paid for his passage, I let it go at that.

"We sailed that night, and for three days everything went well; then the wind died out, and we were becalmed. The inactivity seemed to affect my passenger strangely. He lost his appetite, became restless and irritable, and several times I caught him muttering to himself. On the fifth day of the calm, the Frenchman acted so queerly, I tolled off a sailor to keep an eye on him. That night it was warm and moonlight, just as it is tonight, with enough fog to give everything a ghostly, unnatural appearance. About ten o'clock the Frenchman was up forward, muttering to himself, and growing more excited every minute. The sailor stood nearby, coiling a rope, and keeping a wary eye on him. On a sudden the Frenchman stopped abruptly and stared into the fog, his face pasty



white with fear. "‘Keep him off! Keep him off!’ he screamed.

"As he ran past, the sailor caught him and shook him roughly.

"‘Shut up, you little shrimp!’ he said, ‘there’s nothing after you.’

"‘Keep him off!’ cried the Frenchman, struggling to release himself.

"‘Keep who off?’ questioned the sailor.

"‘Francois!’ shrieked the frightened man. "‘*Mon Dieu*, there he comes!’

"With a jerk he tore himself loose from the sailor’s grasp, and, before anyone could stop him, sprang over the rail, into the sea."

The mate paused a moment, then continued: "I heard afterward that his name was Jules Mareau, and that he had murdered and robbed his pardner, Francois."

"Bah!" scoffed the dyspeptic one, "that was only the effect of a guilty conscience."

"Do—do you think he really saw anything?" asked the girl, in awed tones.

The mate shrugged his big shoulders as he rose. "Who can say what the eyes of a murderer may see?"

As the group dispersed, Mr. and Mrs. Vincent Angelus strolled toward the stern of the vessel and took possession of a couple of deserted deck chairs. After glancing about uneasily, Mrs. Angelus whispered to her companion:

"I wish I hadn't heard that story, Jerry. It's made me dreadfully nervous."

The man laughed lightly. "The sight of Slippery Kate with a case of

nerves is something new under the sun. And while I think of it, allow me to remind you that I am now Vincent Angelus."

The woman spoke again. "You don't suppose he told it for the purpose of seeing if it had any effect—that is, he has any suspicions—"

"Of course not," he interrupted sharply.

Mrs. Angelus sighed heavily. "I don't know what's the matter with me, but I have a presentiment that something is going wrong; I can feel it."

Mr. Angelus frowned, and for the fraction of a second the steely eyes wavered; then he yawned and smiled. "Got a hunch, eh? Well, forget it. I saw both Mag and Rags planted in potter's field on Pauper Island—we passed it an hour back. Take my word for it, they're there to stay; this seeing people after they're dead is all moonshine. Now run along and get some sleep; you'll feel better in the morning."

Drawing a buckskin bag from his pocket, he held it out to her. "Take these sparklers with you and have a look at them. They're worth three hundred thousand; the sight of them ought to cheer you up considerably."

The woman shrank back with a shudder. "No, no, you keep them, Jerry. I'll look at them tomorrow," she replied hastily.

"Just as you say," he returned, dropping the bag carelessly into his pocket. "I'll sit here and smoke a bit before turning in."

He gazed after her retreating figure till it disappeared, then a faint smile curved his thin lips.

"If she keeps up this confounded



nonsense, I'll have to get rid of her," he remarked coolly. Carefully selecting a cigar from a well-filled case, he clipped the end and felt in his pockets for a match. At that instant there came a shrill blast from the steamer's whistle. The cigar dropped from his hand and rolled along the deck. He recovered it and ignited the end with a match that wavered slightly with the unsteadiness of his hand.

"Damn Kate's hunch," he muttered savagely, "it's affected my nerves."

The music and dancing had ceased. The deck was deserted; one by one the staterooms were darkened; a noiseless-footed sailor appeared suddenly, and as quickly was gone; the great ship moved silently through the stillness of the night. The heart of the murderer quailed before his insignificance in the presence of the mighty and mysterious forces of nature. For the first time in his wicked life his nerves of steel were weakening—he was afraid of something, he knew not what; he felt as if some uncanny, irresistible force were stealing upon him from out of the darkness.

With an effort he wrenched himself from this stifling depression. His mind flashed to the fortune in jewels which lay in his pocket. Three hun-

dred thousand dollars' worth—enough to support him in luxury the remainder of his life. With a smile of content, he leaned back in his chair and conjured up visions of a life of idleness and ease.

Lulled into drowsiness by the balmy air and the motion of the ship, his eyes slowly closed; the cigar slipped from his relaxed fingers, and he slept and dreamed.

And in that dream he saw Rags standing over him—bloody and menacing. He awoke with a start; sprang to his feet in terror; turned toward the sea; and was immediately frozen into immobility by seeing two big, bony hands clutch the rail, and the face of Rags—wet, pallid, ghostly in the moonlight—rise all dripping from the sea. They stared at each other for a moment; then a diabolical grin twisted the mouth of the apparition, and a hoarse voice whispered:

"Come, Jerry. Mag's waitin' for you in Hell."

With a scream of fear, the murderer struck at the ghastly thing and missed; then ten long, clammy fingers encircled his throat; he was jerked over the rail; and a shriek of maniacal laughter split the air as two bodies splashed beneath the waves.





# Sold for Beans

BY WILLIAM TILLINGHAST ELDRIDGE

*We can imagine old David Harum chuckling over this Yankee horse-deal, where a sly old horse-fancier got the "double-cross" in a deal that he expected to get something for nothing.*



"BEANS?" questioned Deacon Brown.

"Beans," nodded Si Burns, in agreement.

The deacon stroked his white whiskers meditatively and eyed Mr. Burns's cherubic face. Mr. Burns, trader in all things where a dollar was likely to change hands to Mr. Burns's advantage, was known, at times, to have a penchant for practical jokes.

Deacon Brown was a very sedate person and never, knowingly, walked into a situation which would result in his being made to appear ridiculous.

Yet this offer to part with a good horse, over which there had been a dispute as to weight, appeared filled with doubtful proportions.

"You said 'beans'?" mused the deacon, eying the placid beast.

Si rubbed his round red cheek. "Beans, Deacon," he admitted. "Of course you may be able ter pick the heft of a horse; I ain't sayin' you ain't. You cal'late she'll touch eleven sixty and quit right thar."

"She won't go a mite over eleven seventy," snapped the deacon, a trifle inclined to resent the insinuation that he could be mistaken.

"You be climbing, Deacon—eleven seventy."

"He's gettin' ready ter hedge," chirruped little Mr. Betts, who had wandered out from behind the notion counter of his store into the warm sunshine and closer proximity to the argument.

The shrill voice, intended to be a whisper, did not fail to reach Deacon Brown's sharp ears, and he flushed the least bit.

"Eleven sixty," he snapped. "I said it, and I stand by it."

"Then," smiled Mr. Burns, "I cal'late she'll go more. And I'm so sot on thinkin' I can guess the heft of a horse that I'll take beans fur her."

Perplexity filled the watery eyes of the pillar of the church.

"It's a queer way ter sell," he muttered.

"Wall," suggested Mr. Burns, "you ain't obliged to buy."

But the deacon was anxious to buy. As much as he feared traps—and many had been set for him—still he believed he could endure the risk of being made to look ridiculous if he might buy a horse and pay in beans.

"How'd yer put it, Si?" he inquired.

"You say she'll go eleven sixty. If she goes eleven sixty-one you get the mare, and I get one bean."

With the deacon's nod, there came a gasp from the encircling villagers. Mr. Betts looked at Mr. Jones; Mr.



Simpling, the hardware man, regarded Mr. Cutler, the fishmonger; others, with dubious headshakes turned, wide-eyed, upon their neighbors.

Si Burns was the last man to be thought of as a fool. But this proposition!

"If she goes better'n sixty-one?" frowned the deacon.

"If she goes eleven sixty-two you get the mare and I get two beans—two pounds better'n you say, and the bean fer the fust pound doubled."

"Yes," agreed the deacon, growing eager.

"If she goes one pound better still you pay four beans."

"And if she goes sixty-four?"

"Eight beans. Sixteen if she goes sixty-five."

"You ain't trying to sell me no balker?" demanded the deacon, facing Mr. Burns suddenly.

"You have tried her," answered Mr. Burns.

The deacon nodded and pondered. Then he thrust his hands deep into his pockets and drew a sigh as his eyes considered the prize, as good as his. "Si Burns," he proposed, "I ain't but wonderin' if you be gone plum daffy, but I'll take yer."

"Yer church says something about being yer brother's keeper," suggested Mr. Burns, the merest smile touching the corners of his eyes.

In solemn conclave the deacon and Mr. Burns, the mare following, the village in attendance, proceeded to the scales.

Mr. Betts officiated, nicely balanced the bar—feeling the importance of the occasion—and the mare

was led onto the platform.

"Twelve hundred—jest," announced the owner of the dry goods store.

The deacon's face broadened into one expansive smile. It was not so much of a disgrace to miss by the mere matter of forty pounds when, to offset what little chagrin he might feel, came the ownership of a good horse for a few beans.

"Wall, Si," he chuckled, "you can seize 'em up fur heft. But I ain't kickin' at yer havin' the better on me thar. I'll fetch down yer sixty beans next time I drive in."

"How many?" mused Mr. Burns.

"Sixty?" questioned the deacon.

"One fur the fust," mused Mr. Burns, two fur the second, four fur the third, eight fur the fourth. Then sixteen fur the fifth, and thirty-two fur the sixth. Goin' on, as was to be the way, sixty-four fur the seventh, one hundred and twenty-eight fur—"

"Oh, wall," broke in the deacon, "I'll make it 'er bushel, Si, and that will be a mite more than's comin' to yer by rights."

"Suppose we see on that," suggested Mr. Burns. "Mr. Betts, can we use your store fur a moment?"

Gladly, Mr. Betts offered accommodations for the settlement of a question which seemed to have greater possibilities than any of the attending crowd fancied.

With paper and pencil Mr. Burns bent over the cleared counter. "Jim," he suggested, figuring slowly, "will yer go in and git a quart of beans from Tibbins?"

With the return of the messenger,



Mr. Tibbins in his wake, and all of Mr. Tibbins's customers, Mr. Burns dumped the beans upon the counter.

"Count 'em, Betts, and cast out the broken one," and he went back to his figures.

The deacon, resting one foot and then the other, held silent as long as possible.

"What in tarnation, Si, be you countin' a quart of beans fur? I'll make it two bushels, and I cal'late then you'll be gettin' more'n you should have comin' ter yer."

"So," mused Mr. Burns; "wall we'll see," and he went on with his growing column of figures.

He was through with his task before the quart of beans was counted, and meditatively his cigar turned from corner to corner of his mouth as he watched the flies on the screen door.

At last, Mr. Betts drew a sigh. "I ain't sayin' I'm jest right," he admitted, mopping his brow, "but them are in piles of one hundred, and I makes it three thousand, four hundred and sixty-two beans in a quart."

Mr. Burns nodded. "If the deacon ain't objectin'," he suggested, "we'll call it even three thousand and four hundred."

"Si Burns," thundered the deacon, "what has the number of beans in a quart got ter do with this thin'?"

Mr. Burns glanced up from his paper to which he had been adding more figures.

"It means, deacon, that thar be one hundred and eight thousand, eight hundred beans in a bushel," he announced.

"Wall, I ain't sayin' thar ben't,

am I?" snapped the deacon.

"Which being the case," went on Mr. Burns placidly, "it means that you owe me jest about five million bushels of beans fur that thar mare."

The deacon got his mouth open and his eyes, but no sound escaped from him for a long moment. With him was the audience, agape.

"What?" suddenly roared the deacon.

"It was one fur the fust, two fur the second, and so on, doublin' each pound," explained Mr. Burns, patiently.

"At twenty pounds it comes ter five hundred and four thousand, two hundred and eighty-eight beans, less I've made some slip. Fur the twenty-fust pound over eleven sixty it be double that number which—"

"Nothing of the sort," roared the deacon.

Mr. Burns held forth his paper, and the deacon grabbed it.

With the aid of all who could get within sight, Mr. Burns's figures were gone over. Suddenly, the deacon threw the paper on the counter.

"At two fifty a bushel fur beans, Deacon, that thar mare stands you jest about twelve million dollars," suggested Mr. Burns.

"You go to——Jim jickey," thundered the deacon, and went out the screen door, startling every fly on the wire.

"Say, Si," inquired a breathless voice from the door, "what do yer suppose the deacon will do? He left the mare."

"I cal'late," mused Mr. Burns, "the deacon will jest as soon pay the figure I sot on her when he fust took



a fancy to her. Lest if he don't, I cal'late I'll have ter tie her out thar in the square as his property and so label her."

"Yes," suggested Mr. Betts and Mr. Tibbins in one breath.

"Wall," mused Mr. Burns, "it could be—" and he wrote hastily

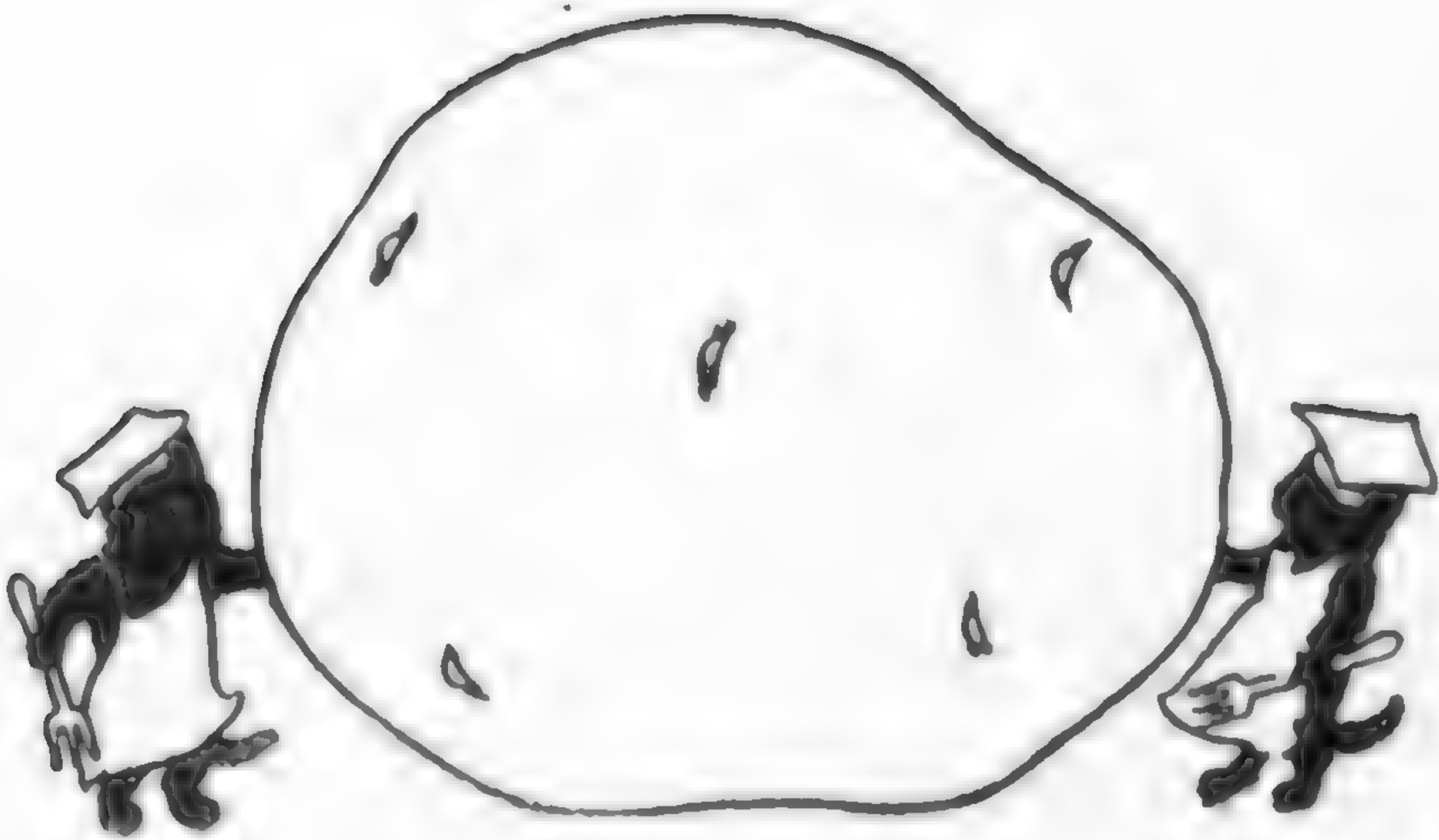
upon a piece of Mr. Betts's wrapping paper, and held the sheet before him.

Those who craned their necks read:

Deacon Brown's Mare.

Sold—for Beans.

Consideration five million bushels, based on weight over eleven sixty—particulars from anybody—at market value. Price in cash, twelve million dollars. Sold.'

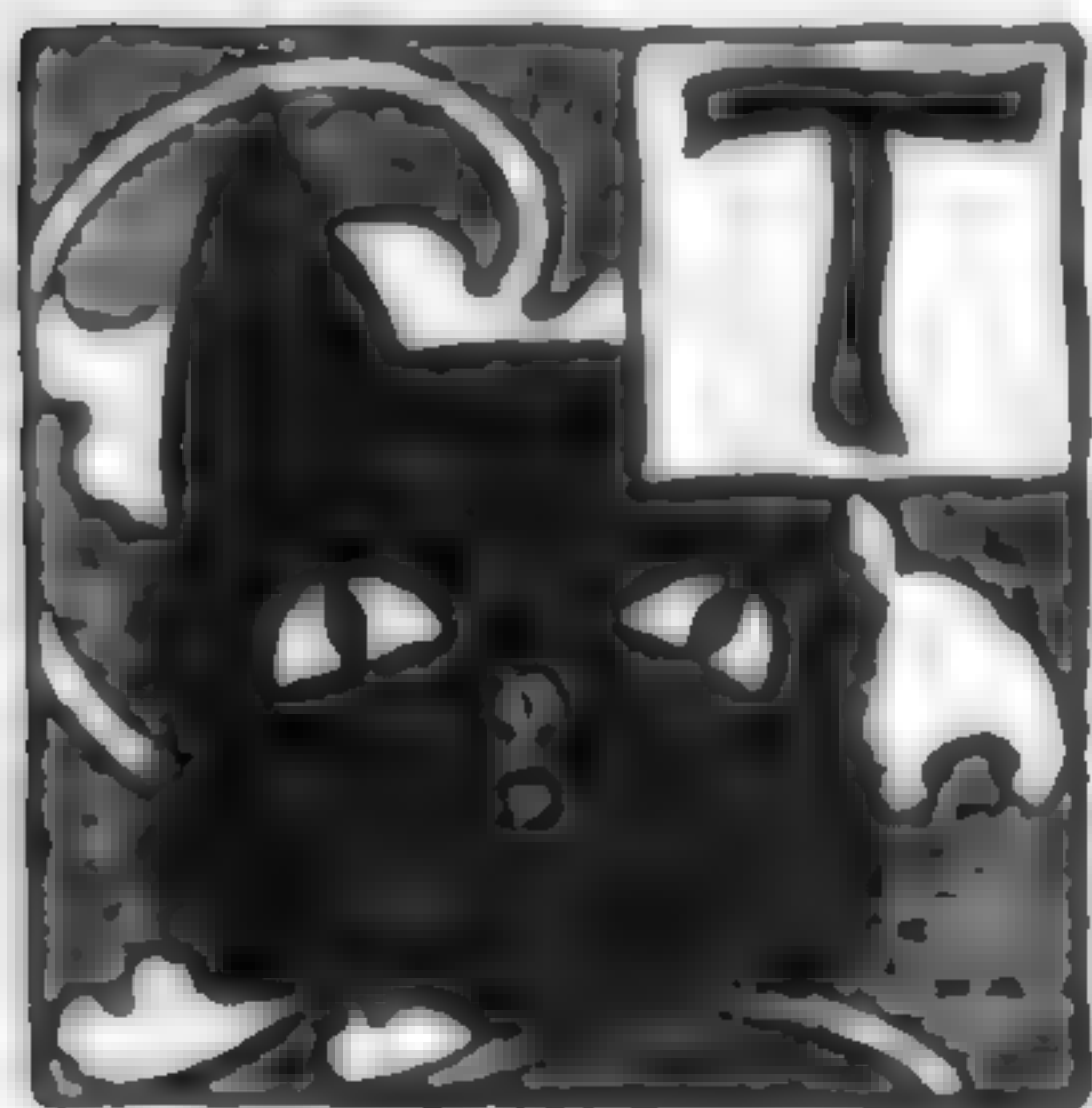




# Missing—One Diamond Salesman

BY HARRY STEPHEN KEELER

*A diamond salesman with a \$30,000 diamond necklace is not to be found. The method of recovering the lost necklace and fixing the responsibility for its disappearance strikes a new note in detective fiction.*



HE chief leaned back in his swivel chair.

"Baumann," he said, "this thing is a little too much for me. All I can do is to have his description telegraphed to every port in the country. As for his letter—there's something odd—something wrong. Tell you what I'd like to do. There's a character in this big city of Chicago that's a regular shark on the Sherlock Holmes business. If anyone can unravel the knot in that postscript, he can. I'd like to hand these two papers over to him."

"Call him in," said his visitor briefly.

The chief pressed a button at the side of his desk. A blue-coated police officer responded instantly. "Send Nichols or one of the other men down to Harrigan's lodging house, find Mackleby Hawkins and tell him to report here immediately."

He turned to his visitor again and continued speaking.

"This Mackleby Hawkins is a queer one. He's what you call a tramp. His hang-out, when he's not gallivanting around the country on the bumpers of a freight, is Harrigan's lodging house. Talks well—carries himself like a man that's had a col-

lege education—but no one knows anything definite about him. How the department got acquainted with him—that's a story in itself—but suffice to say, he's done some mighty clever work for us in three or four big cases in the past few years. Seems to have a natural faculty for the game. I've offered him a steady job with the force on several different occasions. All he does is to laugh and refuse, and sail out on another bumping trip. Whenever he—"

The swinging door to the chief's office opened.

The figure of a man about thirty years old stood framed in the doorway. His hair was raven black; his eyes of the same dark hue had a piercing look that was in keeping with his sharp aquiline features. His clothing comprised a neatly patched pair of trousers, a coat with badly frayed cuffs, and a blue flannel shirt held together at the neck by a bandanna handkerchief. Shading his face, which was covered by a several days' growth of beard, was a gray slouch hat.

"Did you want to see me, Chief?" he drawled. "Just got in off the grit an hour ago."

"Come in, Hawkins. Take a chair. This is Mr. Baumann of Baumann and Rheingold, retail jewelers. Mr. Baumann, suppose you tell Hawkins



yourself, just how the land lies."

Old Baumann adjusted his eyeglasses on his nose. He surveyed the newcomer critically. This was certainly a peculiar looking specimen to hand over for some detective work. Still—the chief would hardly have recommended him unless— Well, he might as well follow the chief's advice if he wished to find out anything at all.

"Well, Mr.—er—ah—Hawkins, here's what we're up against. Last Friday, Skeering—the millionaire harvester machine man of New York—stopped off in our store on his way from the West to look over several diamond necklaces for his daughter's birthday gift. His choice narrowed itself down to two—one valued at thirty thousand dollars—the other at thirty-five thousand. We offered to send one of our salesmen, Murgatroyd, to New York in time to arrive on the daughter's birthday and allow the young lady to select the necklace which appealed to her most. The arrangement was satisfactory.

"Murgatroyd took the jewel case containing the necklaces out Saturday afternoon. We had already purchased for him a through ticket to New York and had reserved a berth on the eight o'clock train that night. Monday was the birthday of Skeering's daughter.

"Murgatroyd was to telegraph me Sunday night on his arrival. Sunday night came—but no telegram. Monday morning came—and still no telegram.

"We communicated with his boarding house at 106 Walton Place. We ascertained that he had packed his

suitcase, entered the cab that he had ordered by 'phone, and which was drawn up to the curb at seven o'clock, and had driven off in the direction of the New York Central Depot. That was all they knew.

"On making inquiries of the railroad, we found that his berth had been occupied; showing of course, that he had followed the procedure we had laid out for him."

"Just a moment," interrupted Hawkins. "How long has this Murgatroyd been in your employ?"

"Twenty years. We trusted him implicitly, although of late, rumors have come to our ears that he's been running around with some burlesque-show actress."

"I infer then, that he's a single man," said Hawkins, "since you state that he lives in a boarding house and that he's been mixed up with this actress. What's the name of this woman, and what theatre has she played at?"

"She goes by the stage name of 'Daisy Dalrymple.' The last theatre she played in was 'The Folly.'"

"Good!" remarked the seedy Hawkins. "Go ahead with the story."

"Well," continued old Baumann, "yesterday, which was of course Tuesday, came—and still no telegram—but a letter signed by the missing Murgatroyd himself." He reached over to the chief's desk and took up two papers. "Here it is."

Chicago, Ill., 1913.

Baumann and Rheingold,  
Retail Jewelers,  
Chicago.

Dear Sirs:—

I daresay you've discovered by this time that you're out two necklaces valued together at sixty-five thousand dol-



lars. Of course, as you've already surmised, no one else but your former slave, J. H. Murgatroyd, is the proud possessor of these gems. By the day you receive this letter, courteously mailed by a friend back in Chicago, I expect to be safely on board a steamer bound for South America. I will not take up any more of your valuable time.

Yours very thankfully,

J. H. Murgatroyd.

P. S. As per your request of last week, I enclose on a separate sheet a complete list of my customers for the last year (my private record) with which to check up your books.

Old Baumann paused. With one hand he removed his eyeglasses; he leaned over, and with the forefinger of the other, tapped Hawkins on the knee.

"And here's the most incomprehensible, mystifying thing in the whole affair," he said impressively. "The list of names that Murgatroyd encloses contains not one person that has ever been a customer of our firm!"

He proffered Hawkins the penciled list.

The latter waved it back. "Just read off the first ten or fifteen of these so-called customers."

"Well," returned the jewelry merchant, clearing his throat, "they run as follows: Edward C. Larson, William P. Lacey, Frank R. Sayre, George B. Regel, William C. Nolan, Mrs. Jennie A. McCauley, Mrs. Mary G. T. Nelson, Thomas L. Sachs, Rev. Frederick Robinson, Mrs. Willard Lawrence, Mrs. Dwight Merriman, Benjamin F. O'Malley, James G. Philben, Mrs. John O. Perkins, Lee Wing Quong, Mrs. ——"

"That's enough," interrupted his listener. He turned to the chief.

"Chief—do you notice anything out of the ordinary about those names?"

"Just ordinary names," grunted the veteran police head. "I happen to know two or three of those people myself. Those are *bona fide* residents."

Hawkins turned to the jewelry dealer. "Mr. Baumann," he asked, "did you ever make a request of Murgatroyd to hand in an account of his past customers?"

"Never. The records of our firm are absolutely complete."

"Is it a customary thing at your store to consummate a sale as high as thirty thousand dollars or more?"

"No. Very rarely do we sell an article worth over a thousand. We don't go in much for the expensive trade."

"Is this letter and list in Murgatroyd's own handwriting?"

"It is—without any doubt."

Hawkins arose.

"Just give me the two documents," he commanded. He tucked them in the pocket of his dilapidated coat. "I'll probably be able to put you in line with some specific information in say—twenty-four hours. I'm going back now to Harrigan's palatial hostelry, dig up an old trunk of mine that's down in his basement, rescue from oblivion my civilized suit of clothes—my boiled shirt and my razor—and then scout around a bit. Good day, gentlemen!"

He stretched himself, yawned, and walked leisurely out. At the door he stopped to roll a cigarette.

"That's his way," said the chief grimly, after he had passed out. "But he gets results!"



It was the afternoon following the interview between Baumann, the chief and Mackleby Hawkins.

The chief lay back in his chair trying in vain to rest comfortably and keep awake at the same time. It was very hot. Outside, in the street, a few horses plodded wearily by, their lazy footsteps sending up clouds of fine dry dust, that settled thickly on every article in the room. A few flies droned languidly back and forth.

He awoke suddenly with a start. A familiar figure, clean-shaven and well-dressed, stood in the doorway, smiling broadly.

The chief was usually very grouchy when he was caught napping. Well, Hawkins," he inquired gruffly, "how are you coming out on yesterday's little problem?"

"Oh—that? That's all solved. Nothing much to it. It's up to you now. Your missing diamond salesman is locked up in a garret room down in the Italian settlement."

"Eh!—what—what's that?" shouted the chief, sitting bolt upright and becoming suddenly wide awake. "Locked up? Who took him in custody?"

"'Taken in custody' is a poor phrase in this instance," returned Hawkins. He happens to be the unwilling prisoner of four Italians—or I might modify the statement and make it three—since one's in New York just now. I might also state that one of these three gentlemen is a master of English. The whole trio is holding Murgatroyd in the effort to make him disclose the whereabouts of the two necklaces. Fortunately, however, he's been too foresighted to

place them in the usual jewel case. They've cut up his clothes and ransacked his suitcase as well.

"Now, Chief, I know what the blackhand and the rest of his tribe are. I've hit the road from 'little old N'York' to the Golden Gate with all types of men; and in the final analysis, the crooked Italian shows a yellow streak from his ear lobes to his toe nails. Just send up about four of your best men, give these fellows a liberal exhibition of firearms, and they'll all collapse. The number of the house, by the way, is 762 Milton Street. You'll find your man locked in the attic."

"Well, by all that's holy—Hawkins—where did you—! Wait!" The chief hurriedly pressed a few buttons; when men appeared in answer to his call he gave a few sharp, decisive orders and directions. Presently, four stalwart plain-clothes men hastened down the broad stone steps of the building. At the sidewalk, they separated and hurried off in different directions.

"And what else have you got to tell me, Hawkins? Here, don't stand, have a seat." The chief drew up an extra chair to his desk.

"Well, Chief, there's not a great deal more to tell you. I might proffer a little advice to Baumann, through you, and that's as follows: tell him he'd be doing a sensible thing if he discharged the uniformed Italian who opens the heavy swinging doors at the store for customers. It's poor policy to employ a man who can't keep from discussing the big deals of his house with his own countrymen."



"Where do you get all this dope?" asked the chief.

"I read Murgatroyd's letter—a little closer than the rest of you—that's all."

The chief scratched his head. "Letter? I don't see yet that Murgatroyd told you all this in his letter. And say, why did he give Baumann a false steer, anyway?"

"He didn't—voluntarily. Murgatroyd telephoned for a cab. When he innocently marched into the one that drew up to the curb in front of his boarding house that Saturday night at seven o'clock, he wasn't aware that three other men were going to spring out of an alley several blocks farther down the street, force their way into it, gag him and tie him up. He didn't know that the driver was one of the gang—that the cab was a special one secured for the purpose. Naturally, he wasn't cognizant of all this, since he had ordered a cab himself from a reputable concern that employs drivers who are beyond suspicion.

"He didn't know either, that one of the gang was all in readiness to make the trip East on his ticket in order to make it show on the Pullman car records that lower berth 14, car 4, train 175, assigned to one J. H. Murgatroyd, had been occupied. Neither should he have been expected to know that he would later be compelled, most likely at the point of a gun, to write a letter to his employers, branding himself as a thief who was bound for South America with his firm's property.

"But—he must have expected from the first moment of his captivity that

the gang that held him tight would make some sort of an attempt, through a false communication, to ward off the possibility of any search being made for him in Chicago—so he did the best he could under the circumstances.

"He utilized the long hours of his solitary confinement in producing a little letter on his own account—one which the leader was only too glad to allow him to enclose, since, from its businesslike aspect, it made the main letter seem so much the more genuine.

"Chief, I read that list of names pretty closely, and a good many times. Then I discarded the hypothesis that this man had fled the country either alone or with this actress, Daisy Dalrymple, for I had already discovered something about that list that you and Baumann had entirely overlooked."

"And what was that?"

"Simply this: Every surname in the group begins with a letter that falls in the portion of the alphabet that lies between L and S inclusive! Here's a slip of paper containing the first fifteen with their prefixes and given names omitted. It's not necessary to bore you with all the rest.

Larson  
Lacey  
Sayre  
Regel  
Nolan  
McCauley  
Nelson  
Sachs  
Robinson  
Lawrence  
Merriman



O'Malley  
Philben  
Perkins  
Quong

"What then does that indicate, Chief? Nothing other than this: that list was compiled from the available portion of some sort of an alphabetical index—for some sort of a reason—which we'll see in a few minutes. Now what's the most common form of alphabetical arrangement of names? The Chicago City Directory of course!

"I made for a city directory, where I commenced to look up these names. I saw in two minutes that I was on the wrong track. Of the first fifteen alone, the names William P. Lacey, James G. Philben, and Lee Wing Quong were missing from the directory. I didn't yet have the correct book—that was obvious.

"What other forms of indexes are common to Chicago citizens? Why not the Subscribers' Directory of the Chicago Telephone Company? I got access at once to the latest one out. Here I had better luck. The names William P. Lacey and James G. Philben showed up—but the elusive Oriental, Mr. Lee Wing Quong, was still unentered. Evidently, I was not yet in possession of the right book.

"So I started out for the Chicago Telephone Company's main office. On the way, I stopped off in the vicinity of Murgatroyd's boarding house on Walton Place, where I spent several profitable hours. I located four livery stables within a radius of half a mile. Of each, I made the same inquiry—whether a conveyance had been ordered any time last Sat-

urday afternoon for J. H. Murgatroyd of Walton Place. I met with a peculiar and similar narrative in every case. A polite voice, it seems, with the faint trace of a foreign accent, had put the same question, over the 'phone, to each livery office in turn, Saturday night at six o'clock. On meeting with a negative answer in three instances, the voice had merely murmured: 'Beg pardon; my mistake,' and had rung off.

"But in the fourth instance, it so happened, that a cab actually had been ordered for J. H. Murgatroyd of Walton Place. On obtaining an affirmative response, the polite voice had replied: 'Mr. Murgatroyd has altered his plans. Kindly cancel the order for his cab. Good bye.' The livery establishment immediately nullified the order on the books.

"So I hied myself over to the main office of the Chicago Telephone Company, where I made a request to be allowed to examine the directories that have been issued at intervals of every three months, for the last twenty years. They handed me a curt refusal. That was the time they 'phoned you at my bidding; after they got you on the wire, however, everything was fine and dandy. They conducted me at once to the old files of subscribers.

"In the directory that just preceded the one in use today, several more names on my list failed to materialize, so I searched further and further back until, in the directory of January—March, 1908,—six years back, I succeeded in locating every name that Murgatroyd had written. This then, or one of the same edition, containing



Chicago's old system of exchanges and numbers, was the book from which the list had been compiled.

"I glanced over the addresses that corresponded to each name. Those of the first five ran as you see on this slip of paper:

625 Cornelia Str.  
1304 E. 57th Str.  
6544 S. Paulina St.  
700 N. Kedzie Ave.  
848 Lakeside Pl.

"But assigned to the sixth name was no address at all—merely the following notation:

..... toll .....

"Now, as anyone knows, the word 'toll' in the telephone directory indicates that the party resides in some village or town of Cook County outside of Chicago, and that a long-distance wire is necessary; at any rate, it does not constitute an address. So I discontinued any further study along that line and turned my attention to the telephone exchanges and exchange numbers, of which the first fifteen ran as you may notice on this next slip of paper:

Lake View	2033
Hyde Park	850
Wentworth	1891
Garfield	550
Edgewater	538
toll. . . Oak P'k.	973
Edgewater	2076
Hyde Park	172
Midway	1234
North	1926
North	591
Kenwood	1479
Edgewater	2033
Englewood	377
So. Ch'go	126

"Now, Chief, the exchanges as they run down the list present nothing unusual nor satisfactory—only a frequent repetition of the common ones—'Edgewater' and 'North'—but the exchange numbers, ah! they were the key to the mystery!

"It's not necessary to show you all the processes that I put them through—how I added 'em, multiplied 'em, took the first digits, and the last digits, and tried everything I could think of—till I finally struck it.

"You'll observe that if you erase the last two figures on each exchange number you'll have left in some cases, one digit—in other cases, two digits. For instance—2033 with the last two figures erased leaves just a 20; and 850 under the same operation leaves just an 8; and 1891 treated in the same manner leaves just an 18. Now, I have here a separate sheet of paper with the left-hand column showing the first fifteen exchange numbers; the right-hand column shows the same numbers with the two right-hand figures erased.

2033	.....	20
850	.....	8
1891	.....	18
550	.....	5
538	.....	5
973	.....	9
2076	.....	20
172	.....	1
1234	.....	12
1926	.....	19
591	.....	5
1479	.....	14
2033	.....	20
377	.....	3
126	.....	1



"You'll again observe, if you examine carefully, that none of these numbers in the right-hand column exceeds 'twenty-six.' From that simple fact alone, we must suspect a simple code message, since the simplest code between letters and numbers is, of course, the one where 'A,' the first letter of the alphabet, is represented by '1'; where 'B,' the second letter of the alphabet, is represented by '2,' and so on, through the twenty-six letters.

"Now, our first figure in the right-hand column is '20' and the twentieth letter in the alphabet is 'T'; our next figure is '8' and the eighth letter of the alphabet is 'H'; the following figure is '18' and the eighteenth letter of the alphabet is 'R.' Substituting in each case, the letter of the alphabet that corresponds numerically to it, our column of figures presents a column of letters, the first fifteen showing as follows:

20	.....	T
8	.....	H
18	.....	R
5	.....	E
5	.....	E
9	.....	I
20	.....	T
1	.....	A
12	.....	L
19	.....	S
5	.....	E
14	.....	N
20	.....	T
3	.....	C
1	.....	A

"At this point, I knew without any further doubt that Murgatroyd was in some sort of predicament, that he had attempted to get a few words to us by a code and, as it appears, all he

had was the middle portion of some antiquated telephone directory.

"Carrying the substitution process through the entire column of numbers that we obtain from the whole list of names, and arranging these letters alongside of one another, we get the following jumble:

THREEITALSENTCABHELD  
PRISTOPWHITEFRAMHST  
WOCHIMSNOGFBHVCTCL  
OSALSOSEARCHDSTCSHU  
RRYHELP.

"By splitting this jumble up and inserting a few letters and punctuation marks where it appears necessary, we get something more coherent. Here it is:

THREE ITAL(IAN)S  
ENT(ERED) CAB; (AM)  
HELD PRIS(ONER) (AT) TOP  
(OF) WHITE FRAM(E)  
H(OU)S(E) (WITH) TWO  
CHIM(NEY)S; NO. G-F-B;  
H(A)V(E) C(U)T  
CLO(THE)S, ALSO  
SEARCH(E)D S(UI)T  
C(A)S(E); HURRY HELP.

"Now one obscurity remains: 'No. G-F-B.' By merely leaving the original numbers in place of the senseless letters G—F—B, we have '7—6—2.'

"Now, where would three Italians, or four, including the driver, with a bound man in a cab, be likely to have imprisoned him for several days while they made a thorough search of his clothing and belongings—while they interrogated him again and again as to the location of the jewels, and received but one explanation, which they would not believe? Why—no place else than down in Little Italy;



for you know, yourself, Chief, they couldn't get away with it elsewhere.

"So I've spent all morning taking in the Italian settlement from the elevated railroad west to the river, and from Chicago Avenue north to Division Street, looking for houses numbered '762.' I've met with all sorts of 'em—green houses and red houses; even Italian churches and empty lots, until suddenly, at 762 Milton Street—a narrow, dark, badly-paved and ill-smelling thoroughfare—I ran square into a white frame house with two chimneys, and with attic windows tightly boarded up.

"Back I went, hot-foot, to the Telephone Company. Their installation and removal records show that in the spring of 1908, a telephone was removed from 762 Milton street—which accounts for the presence there of such an old 'phone directory as one of that date. From the company's offices—"

The telephone on the desk jangled sharply. The chief raised the receiver to his ear.

"H-e-l-l-o—hello—that you, O'Rourke?— nabbed the three of 'em, you say—good—and—Murgatroyd—he's O.K. is he?—pretty bruised?—too bad we can't fix the beggars for that—of course they wouldn't show fight—they never do—and the diamonds?—what! Well, I'll be—all right—all of you report to my office at once—good-bye."

The chief turned towards his visitor. "O'Rourke tells me that the diamonds—"

"Were safe all the time," interrupted Hawkins. "I forgot to tell you about that. Murgatroyd lost his

nerve Saturday afternoon; didn't want to take a chance on carrying sixty-five thousand dollars worth of diamonds over a twenty-four-hour trip, so he carried 'em to the office of one of the big express companies and expressed 'em as an insured package—insured at their actual value. He counted on having old Skeering identify him at New York.

"His landlady kindly consented to my going over his room yesterday afternoon. Tucked down in the bosom of one of his newly-laundered shirts, I found the express company's receipt. Here it is."

The chief looked at Hawkins for several minutes; then he spoke. "Hawkins, you're an ingenious chap, and at the same time you're a blanked fool. Are you going to be a tramp all your life? There's a place on the force for you anytime you want it. Do you want to start in tomorrow morning as one of the regulars?"

"Say, Chief, did you ever go flying through the night on the blind baggage of a sixty-mile-an-hour flyer, or swinging your legs out the opening of a 'side-door' Pullman;—full of the joy of living—and freedom—and speed? Did you ever—sh-h-h!" He held up a warning forefinger. His eyes took on a far-away look. Can you hear it, Chief?"

The chief strained his ears. Then he stepped to the window and peered out. He heard nothing—nothing except a wierd, long-drawn-out whistle, followed by the staccato 'chug-chug-chug' of a freight train pulling out of the railway yards near the station. So he turned back to his desk.

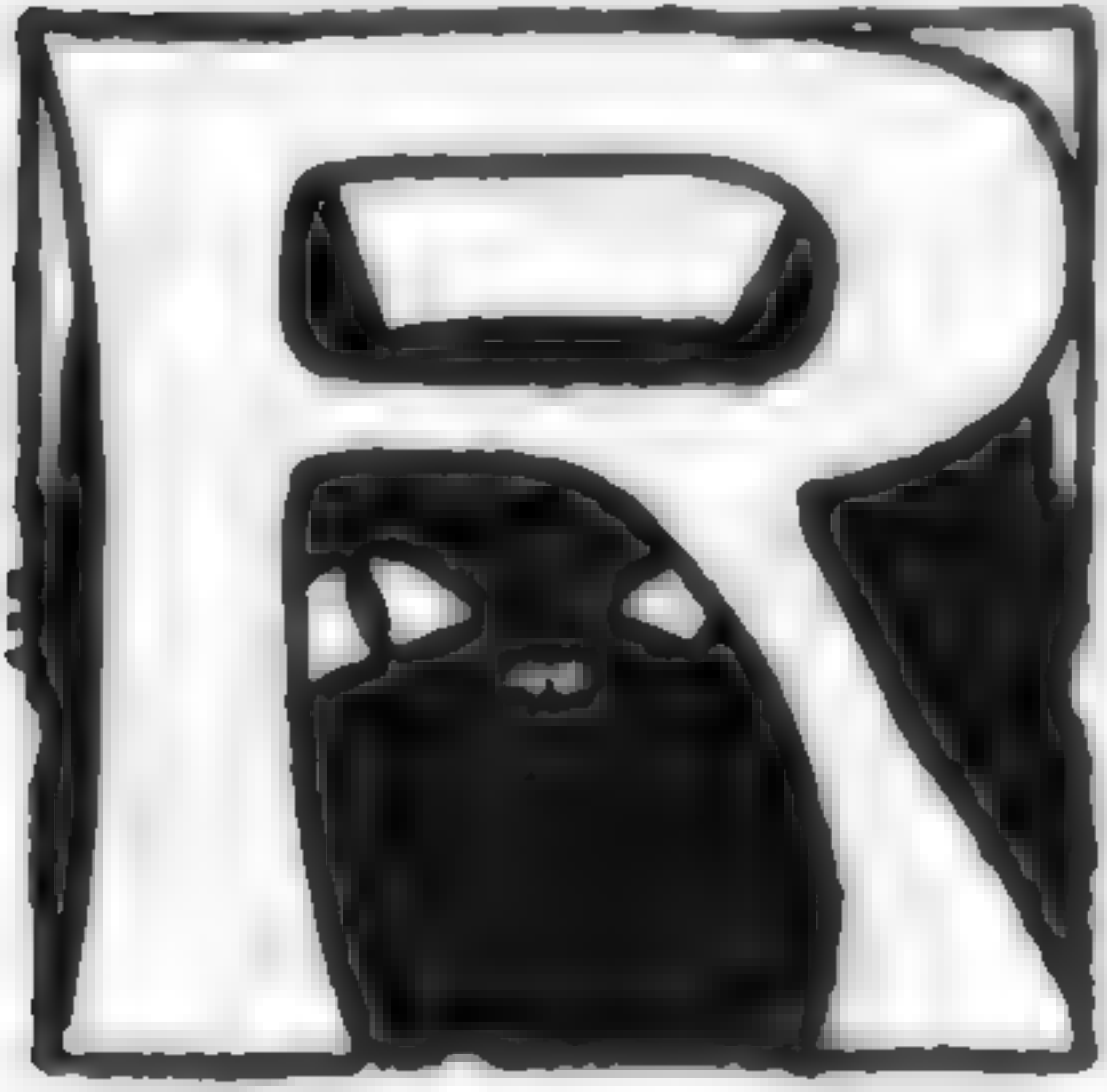
But his visitor was gone.



# The Hitless Wonder

BY A. E. SWOYER

*A star fielder of a champion baseball team is a miserable performer at the bat. He faces banishment to the "bushes" on the eve of his marriage because of this weakness. A hit in an important game will save him to the flesh-pots of big league playing.*



RED" HOFFMAN customarily finished the season with a fielding percentage of .998 or thereabouts, and a batting average having .173 as a maximum—figures which influenced in exact ratio his connection with the payroll of the Tigers, and his place in the affections of the redoubtable John McGuckin, manager of that sterling band of athletes.

In fact, as McGuckin said, "Red" put more gray in his hair than did all his other troubles combined, and it was rumored among the members of the club that the manager always kept two unsigned papers in his pocket—one being a release for the outfielder, to be used when that worthy "fanned" more than three times in one game, and the other a check for bonus due whenever "Red" saved a game by picking a drive off the right-field fence.

But "Red" was lucky; season after season passed without seeing his separation from the paycheck, and whenever the harassed manager felt that he had due and just cause for applying his John Hancock to the papers that would send "Red" to Kalamazoo or to Oshkosh, that gentleman would render the process null and void by

pulling off some sensational fielding stunt.

Finally, however, luck deserted him—and, as luck will, at a most inconvenient time. The "Hitless Wonder" was in love with a lady whom only the salary of a Big Leaguer could support in the style to which she was willing to become accustomed, and by the irony of fate the prospective bridegroom was never nearer transfer, bag and baggage, to the most insignificant of the minors. Nevertheless, by doing the impossible in the field, and by daring cunning on the paths, on the few occasions when some pitcher's liberality got him on the bases, "Red" managed to hang on to almost the close of the season—a time when, with the Tigers well up in the first division, visions of prize money and the fat pickings of post-season games tickled his vision.

Then the blow fell, in the shape of a summons to the manager's office—a sanctum which "Red" entered with dire forebodings, to find McGuckin engaged in the careful perusal of a familiar-looking paper.

"Hoffman, you're a Class A fielder, but you couldn't spank a white-washed elephant with a barn door—not even if someone held the elephant! So—I guess it's yours for the Alfalfa League and the uncut timber, Danny. I'm sorry."



Hoffman shifted from one foot to the other, and twiddled his hat nervously.

"How about another chance, Mac?" he blurted. "I got particular reasons for wanting to stay awhile longer—and I really ain't so bad when I get on base, am I?"

"No kick there, Danny—but you don't ever get on!" McGuckin fiddled the document absently for a moment, then turned sharply towards his fielder.

"Still it's pretty near the end of the season—tell you what I'll do, Danny; we'll let tomorrow's game decide it. If you make a hit or a run, or if you drive in a run, you stay with the Tigers—the rest of the year, anyway. If you don't—well, I don't care if you chase a fly clear up the top bench of the bleachers, you'll be canned. Put that in your pipe!"

"Red's" grin extended from ear to ear. "You're on, Mac!" he chirped. "Hit, run, or Oshkosh—that's me!" And, with a military salute, he whirled out of the office.

His cheerfulness staid with him through to the next day, nor was he discouraged one whit by his knowledge that to hold his job he would have to perform a feat that he had accomplished so rarely that a safe hit was an event which provoked comments on the part of his teammates. He even stepped up to the plate with a jaunty air and a confident expression, which so surprised the pitcher that he handed "Red" three wide ones before he settled down and struck him out.

The next time Hoffman came up was in the third; he improved the

occasion by swinging viciously at the first ball pitched, with a result entirely out of proportion to his effort, for the sphere rose in a gentle curve and settled with a dull "tunk" into the first baseman's mitt. Poor "Red"—this was his nearest approach to making good, for in two more times at bat he struck out, once on three pitched balls.

McGuckin seethed on the bench, for this was an important game; both twirlers were pitching air-tight ball, and the score was tied. So the ninth inning began, with the Tigers in the field; Hutchings, pitching like a machine, mowed down the first two Bronchos—and the next man up met the ball squarely on the A. G. Spaulding, with a full swing of his powerful arms.

At the crack of the bat, Danny put down his head and dug in his toes in a wild race to the fence—he had heard that sound before and knew what it meant. As he ran, he glanced once over his shoulder, and then ran harder than before, for the ball was tagged "Home Run" as plainly as a label on a crate of dry-goods. As he neared the fence, he took one more look—then sprang into the air, half turning as he did so. With a crash that might have been heard in the stands, he struck the fence, then fell in a heap at its foot—but clasped in his bare hand was the ball, and the score was still tied!

Before the nearest players could get to him, "Red" sprang to his feet and trotted in amid a storm of applause that rocked the stands; to this he turned a deaf ear, for it was an accustomed thing—besides, the same voices had yelled hoots and cat-calls



when he had struck out in earlier innings, as is the way with crowds. More than that, he was bruised and sore from head to foot—and he was the first man to face the pitcher, with the necessity before him of making a hit or a run, or else losing his job.

To give himself more time to pull together, he trotted in very slowly, dropping to a walk as he neared the first-base line—the Broncho guardian of that sack having tossed his mitt to the ground, according to custom, and then made his way to the bench. “Red” almost stepped on his glove, which he picked up, and then tossed a trifle farther from the base line—and no one but his manager noted that he held it for a trifle longer than seemed necessary.

“Play ball!” yelled the umpire, and “Red” stepped slowly to the plate, while the big Broncho pitcher wound himself into fearful contortions and grinned happily at the prospect of starting the inning with a strike-out. Perhaps he was careless, or it may have been due to “Red’s” desperation, but the batter made a mighty swipe at the first ball pitched, connected fairly, and was on his way to first like a scared rabbit!

“Red’s” hard luck had not deserted him, however, for his drive was straight at the Broncho short-stop, who made a beautiful pick-up, and lined the ball to first with all the strength of a willing arm. The baseman, seeing Danny coming like a race-horse, but still some yards away, smirked gleefully as he reached for the perfectly thrown ball, which settled with a hollow “tunk” into his waiting mitt—and then, with a yell of

pain, he dropped the ball!

It seemed almost as if Hoffman had been expecting something of the sort, for without slackening speed he rounded first, and set full sail for second—a fact which the astonished baseman, still looking with wonder at his mitt, in a vain endeavor to account for the dropped ball, did not realize until the yells of the crowd woke him up. Stooping quickly, he snatched the ball, juggled it for a moment—and then threw it some ten feet over the second baseman’s head!

By the time that the left fielder had retrieved the ball, Danny was on third—or rather sailing past third, at a mile-a-second clip. The left fielder took one look at the runner, decided that no relayed toss to the second baseman could catch him, and attempted the long throw home.

It was a beautiful effort: the ball shot almost on a line from deep left to the catcher’s mitt. When “Red” was still twenty feet from home, the catcher was all set to receive the ball, and every man in the bleachers and grandstand was on his feet, frantically yelling “Slide! Slide!”

So Danny did! A streak of dust, starting some ten feet up the path, and terminating in a tangled mass of arms and legs at the plate, marked the attempt, with players and umpire obscured by a yellow cloud.

Then, from out of the confusion, sounded the umpire’s voice.

“S-a-a-fe!” he yelled—and the game was over, with “Red’s” run winning for the Tigers.

Barely had McGuckin gotten to his office when “Red’s” grinning face projected itself around the corner of the



door, and his lanky form ensconced itself into the manager's other chair.

Without a word the manager reached into his desk, pulled the blank release out of a pigeon hole and dropped it into the waste basket. Drawing his check book towards him, and with fountain pen poised, he looked sharply at the fielder.

"What I said yesterday goes, Danny!" he announced. "Also, you've got a little bonus coming to you for that catch against the fence—but you don't get it till you tell me what happened to that first baseman!"

"Red" twiddled his hat and looked at the ceiling.

"Well, Mac," he drawled, "you

just suppose that somebody stuck a needle into the palm of that baseman's mitt so's it was out o' sight, but not quite goin' through on the other side. He'd be some surprised when he went to catch a swift throw, wouldn't he?"

For a moment player and manager gazed understandingly at one another, and a wide grin spread over the features of each. Still grinning, McGuckin began to fill out "Red's" check.

"What'll we call this, Danny?" he chuckled—"bonus or wedding present?"

"Better make it enough for both, Mac dear!" answered "Red," brazenly.





# Mr. Purvis of Pensacola

BY HINTON GILMORE

*Here is a real Black Cat story that will start you chuckling. Of course none of us are superstitious and maybe that's the reason we never walk under ladders and always shiver when we see 13!*



If you chanced to read the journal of that date, you already know that on Friday, April 13th, Mr. G. W. Purvis, dealer in hides, pelts, tallow and beeswax, left Pensacola bound for St. Louis.

But sometimes there is more to a casual journey to St. Louis than appears in the column devoted to "City Brevities and News of the Streets." Let us, therefore, violate the Interstate Commerce Commission ruling on that subject, and ride free and unobserved with the well-known Pensacola dealer in hides and pelts, tallow and beeswax.

Nothing of greater pith occurred between Pensacola and Mobile than the minor interruptions of a young man with a semi-uniform, who had viands and magazines to sell, for Mr. Purvis, with thrift, chose to ride in a day coach.

At Mobile, there boarded the train one "Oriole Joe" Maxey. He had about him a furtive air and a gaily checked suit of clothes. A hand-bag, which he bore gingerly, had the bulge that comes from compact and weighty contents. It would not be a bad guess to venture that "Oriole Joe" carried in his satchel an ordinary gold brick of commerce, whose core, were it

pierced by a suspecting gimlet, would have assayed heavily in lead.

His purpose in getting on at Mobile was two-fold—to avoid the awakened attention of the police, and to sell, mortgage, or otherwise convey to an innocent purchaser for value, one gold brick to the best commercial advantage. He might have chosen to ride in the more luxuriously fitted parlor car which adorned the rear of the train, but "Oriole Joe" sought the day coach, wherein rode, blissfully ignorant of gold bricks, our Mr. Purvis of Pensacola.

"Oriole Joe" entered the car and sized up the occupants. He was quick to note the trusting eye and the receding chin of the Pensacolan. In the third seat beyond, he also observed another promising-looking prospect. Truly, this began to look like a prosperous sally into the marts of trade, and he bemoaned the fact that his extreme poverty prevented his purchase of lead sufficient for two marketable bricks. With one, it was a question of choosing between Purvis and the other prospect, a farmer who had just settled a mortgage on his home and was heading for New Orleans to buy an automobile.

The instinct of chance was strong in Maxey. It was a religion with him. He would hardly have thought of starting out on Friday the 13th, except



that he held a superior dread of being locked up on such an unlucky day. So, with two birds ready for the plumous salt, he hesitated, and finally put the issue up to fortune. Drawing a coin from his pocket, he designated Purvis, the pelt dealer, "tails," and the farmer who pined for rapid locomotion, "heads." There was a trifling spin of the disc. Maxey observed the result with a satisfied smile, and forthwith struck up an acquaintance with the farmer.

Ensuing events have no interest except to a New Orleans automobile dealer, whose well-devised plan of follow-up letters failed to bring in a promising prospect just when he seemed cinched.

Miss Celeste Adair, very attractive, though overdressed, boarded the train of Mr. Purvis of Pensacola, at New Orleans, ticketed ostensibly for Meridian. But she had something more in view than a short smoky ride upon the cars. Briefly and bluntly, Miss Adair was low in funds. Life in New Orleans is expensive, and the young woman, being a devotee of certain refined palaces of chance, longed for the wherewithal to make an uphill climb against Luck. Her object in taking a trip at this time was to make the acquaintance of some married person of home-town respectability, from whom funds might be drawn by that inelegant but often effective procedure of blackmail. Miss Adair chose the day coach as the most likely field for her endeavors.

Scarcely had the train left New Orleans—for action in brief stories must be swift—when she observed Mr. Purvis. Here, in all innocence, was

game. He looked just prosperous enough to stand for about a \$250 monthly gouge for perhaps a year, before threshing it out over his own lares and penates, and then appealing to the police. Mr. Purvis, unconscious of the unkind scheme, scanned the quotations of the Hide and Pelt Dealer's Guide.

Miss Adair made her survey more inclusive. The car yielded, however, but one other prospect. From appearances he was a man of bucolic dignity—professor, perhaps, in a small school, or pastor tending the spiritual grazing of a small town flock. From either of the two men, the adventuress felt that there might be an income derived. It was a matter of no consequence to her which one paid. Being a follower in the ragged train of Chance she left it to her fickle highness.

Thrusting a dainty finger between the pages of a book she carried, she agreed with herself that if the number under her hand proved to be an even numeral, Mr. Purvis should by that edict be chosen to rehabilitate the lowering funds of the young woman; if the numeral were odd, the distinction would descend upon the dignified gentleman with the clerical costume.

At Meridian, a man with beetling brow and formidable chin boarded the train and hurriedly approached the seat where Miss Adair sat in mirthful conversation with her companion. There were harsh words spoken low. Threats of divorce proceedings with corresponding publicity were effectively voiced. Some agreement was reached, and Miss Adair accompanied her beetle-browed confederate back to



New Orleans on the next train. The president of a little college for girls over near the Alabama line, is sending her \$200 each month with which she is slowly recuperating her sunken losses.

Meridian added a few passengers to the train list, among them Harvey Colliver, suavity itself. Dressed stylishly, manicured, polished and perfumed, he seemed out of place in the dingy day coach. But it was a question of business with him, and he lost no time in setting about his work. Standing in the doorway of the car, he sized up the field. Observing Mr. Purvis of Pensacola, he smiled. He almost went forward to take the vacant half of the seat, without further preliminaries. A second glance, though, revealed another promised dividend. Across the car and forward, sat a stout passenger, begirdled by a heavy gold watch chain—one of the obvious earmarks of small town affluence.

Colliver had a proposition in which he felt either might be interested. But complications might arise if he attempted to interview them both. It was a question of a quick choice.

Colliver, being weak on matters requiring instant decision, left the problem to Chance, ingeniously. If the next station bore a name of one syllable, he proposed to interest Mr. Purvis in his scheme, if of two syllables or more, the stout gentleman with the auriferous girdle was to be approached. The next station was Bartholomew, and two hours later Harvey Colliver left the train at an obscure town in Northern Mississippi, and the begirdled stout man perused a

deed, reciting a consideration of \$600, cash in hand, paid for certain city lots in the town of Subaquia, located, had he but known, twenty miles out in the Gulf of Mexico.

Without further incident, early morning brought the train to St. Louis, and the hide dealer from Florida, more wearied than rested by an awkward sleep gained while he crouched his angular self between resisting seats, arose, stiffened from his ungainly slumbers, and walked, blinking, into the station. Remaining just long enough at a convenient lunch counter to engulf a cup of coffee, he wandered aimlessly in a direction which he imagined would bring him into the business section of the city.

At five o'clock A. M. in outlying streets, little traffic stirs in St. Louis. But at a darkened corner, two men stood in the shadow and observed whatsoever might be moving. They saw the approaching Mr. Purvis and noted with satisfaction (as they say in the "Dictated but not read" letters,) that he wore in the bosom of his seventy-five cent shirt, a diamond stud, which sparkled gaily as all good studs are supposed to do, whether in Pensacola, or St. Louis.

The shadowed shadows decided upon seizure and forfeiture, such being a method of acquisition in which they were proficient. A minute or so, and the prize was almost within grasp: being merely a question of a quick blow in the back of the man's head, a hasty pinch at the shirt bosom, and a speedy getaway through convenient alleys.

Closer came the prey. Suddenly



"Lop-Eared" Hunt whispered:

"Nuttin' doin' tonight, bo! I've lost the rabbit's foot out of me pocket!"

Which goes far in explaining why Mr. Purvis, in perfect good health and humor, much refreshed by his walk from the station, came into the Continental Hotel, aroused a sleepy night clerk and inquired for a room without bath.

The Continental had but two empty rooms for the price at which Mr. Purvis desired to be housed. They were numbered, if you chance to be interested in such trifling statistics, 1323 and 1313. Given but two chances, with the necessity of making a choice, the clerk became vacillation personified. He seemed unable to select. First his hand stretched for the key to room 1313, and back again to No. 1323.

At that moment Bell Boy No. 13, seeking instructions relative to ice water desired, urgently, by a bibulous reservoir in No. 417, came within view of the hesitant clerk. He saw the boy's badge with its emblazoned "13" and considered the matter settled propitiously, handed key No. 1313 to the menial who had charge of the new guest's solitary suitcase—shabby security for a much-desired ransom.

"Please call me at eight o'clock in the morning," the Pensacolan admonished as he vanished toward the elevator, leaving the yawning night clerk with leisure for his desired repose.

At eight o'clock, a dutiful servant rapped lightly on the door of Room 1313. No response came, and the rap-

ping increased in rapidity and vigor. Still no response.

There came through the transom a wispy odor of fugitive gas. Quickly apprehensive, (gas being expensive,) the boy summoned his superiors, and the door was unlocked with a key sent up from the desk. There was an undeniable presence of gas. It wasn't even necessary to light a match to find the point of escape, for a low hissing from a pipe in the corner of the room, gave a quick clue to the break. After pausing to shut off the supply at the point of intake, the hotel servants gave attention to the unconscious figure on the bed. Life existed in the crumpled heap of humanity, but at a low ebb. Physicians were summoned, restoratives were placed in operation, and very slowly the gentleman was brought back from the hem of the hereafter.

A reporter, inquisitive as his clan must ever be, sought, in addition to information gleaned from the hotel register, to learn more thoroughly the subject matter for his first yarn of the day. With no pang of impropriety he searched the clothing of the man who was being resuscitated. In an upper vest pocket, the reporter found a card which shall be read in your presence and the reading shall end the tale.

The card proclaimed the unconscious man to be:—

G. W. PURVIS,

Pensacola, Fla.

President National Association for the Eradication of Senseless Superstition.  
Our Creed:—"There's no such thing as luck!"



# Ghosts of Other Days

BY L. W. MEREDITH

*Most times the ghosts of days gone by bob up to embarrass us but sometimes, as in this case, the ghosts serve very good purposes.*



PRETTY Polly."

"Awk-awk! I'll be back at midnight."

"You'll what?"

"Awk-awk! I'll be back at midnight. I'll be back at midnight."

"Um-hum." Whereat father turned away and picked up the evening paper.

After the evening meal, father walked out into the library with daughter. Besides possessing a goodly share of property which he had acquired by many hard years of labor on the farm, John Harmon possessed a daughter to aid in spending the income therefrom. He also possessed a keen brain which neighbors had been unable to fathom since he had taken possession of the old Knox property years before.

Whence Harmon came, or what his past had been, neither his rustic neighbors of the farm or his friends of the small town to which he had later retired, had been able to discover. Suffice it to say that he had "blown in," purchased a quarter section and, by diligent work, added thereto three other quarter sections, an elevator, and stock sufficient to control the village bank.

Now, "Dad" Harmon had retired to the village and spent most of his time in his library and in sending

checks to his daughter at the boarding school, and later at the seminary. The check issue did not cease when she had completed her schooling, for the city was nearby, and society called—society, into which none other of the village girls had been able to break.

But Nadine possessed charm, beauty, wit, education, talent; and father possessed coin. Yet Nadine had one fault, father maintained, and that was termed "flightiness" by fond parent.

"Nadine," he said, again taking up his evening paper, "I saw that young Shagrue leaving as I came in this evening."

Nadine flushed. She saw a squall ahead. Father did not appreciate Harry Shagrue's acquaintance. Harry was everything desirable if possession of inherited money and natural ability to spend it were all that might be required of man. But father saw only the idle, unambitious, irresponsible trait in Nadine's caller.

"You just don't like Harry because he doesn't work," Nadine pouted. "He doesn't need to work. He's awfully good to me, and his people——"

"Awr-k! Awk! I'll be back at midnight. I'll be back at mi——!"

"Nadine, that's my old Dante."

"Awr-k! Awr-k!" screeched the



bird while it tumbled rudely from its perch when the heavy book, hurled by the girl, struck its cage, and Nadine peevishly hurried from the room.

"Oh! Uh-hum!" mused father.

Up in his smoking den, Father Harmon puffed slowly at his pipe. An amused smile played about his lips, and now and then an insuppressible chuckle shook his sides.

"I guess our long-prying gossip mongers wouldn't gloat over this array," he murmured to himself. "There'd be some others pleased to, if they could step in now—Old Chief Halpin, for instance. There's the slug that tapped Johnny Scholes when he lost his Futurity winnings. There's the old set Billy and Johnny used when they cracked the Central Trust. That's when 'Johnny' mysteriously disappeared, and John Harmon bought a farm and became a modern, up-to-date, scientific agriculturist.

"But I guess I won't need any of that junk. It's back to the safe with that. Here's the old knife that 'Johnny the Slasher' was an adept with, and the edge is still as keen as a razor. Say, your last job is at hand, old blade. Then it's the furnace for you and all your partners."

A black cap and a stringy gray mustache accompanied the keen-bladed knife into a pocket, and John Harmon's past went back into the heavy safe where it had been buried for these twenty-five years.

As father passed down the hall to his room, he noted the light burning in his daughter's room and rapped.

"Good night, daughter."

"Good night, fa-father," came the tearful reply.

It was eleven o'clock. And the bird had said:

"I'll be back at midnight."

"But surely," thought Nadine, "father did not think anything of the bird's senseless chatter."

There was nothing unusual about the village station until one minute before train time. Then the crowd sat up and took notice.

When eleven lonely, unaccompanied men, waiting at a junction station for a midnight train, observe approaching them an inconsequential fellowman escorting as rare a vision of feminine loveliness as ever graced a Country Club ball, there is likely to be a stir.

So the eleven individual, lonely men at the village station, took a new interest in life when a nervous, drooping youth kangarooed up to the ticket window and purchased tickets for two to the city, while a remarkably pretty girl stood guard over a pair of brand-new suit cases.

"Old John Harmon's daughter, I'll be blowed," whispered a waiting brakeman to the new ticket agent.

"Elopin', I'll bet my bottom dollar."

"Aw, let 'em alone," yawned the agent.

So engrossed were all in the pair—or rather the girl—that no one took notice of the short, thick-set man with the heavy cap and scraggly moustache, when he came in and took a seat in the far end of the station waiting-room. Neither did any one notice that he did not buy a ticket, but walked toward the door as a flash of light



and a whistle's shriek served notice of the midnight flyer's approach.

Foremost in the line to the door, was the insipid youth and the bewitching girl. But the door seemed to stick, and try as he might, the bulky man with the stringy, scraggly moustache could not budge it. The train stopped and the waiters, impatient, crowded about the door, when it suddenly gave way to the bulky man's jerk and he crashed back square against the insipid youth.

"Oh, I beg your pardon, sir, a thousand times," said the stranger, as he lifted the youth to his feet and aided him to adjust his overcoat, and the travelers rushed to the train. But none observed that the little stout man did not climb aboard.

The blissful *tete-a-tete* of an exceedingly lovely girl and an over-fastidious, under-fascinating man, was rudely interrupted.

"Tickets," demanded a gruff voice at Harry's elbow.

"I—I, why—certainly I put the tickets in my vest pocket," said Shagru.

But as his fingers were withdrawn ticketless from his left vest pocket, his lustreless eyes popped wide with astonishment. The tickets were not there.

"Wha-where?" and his lifeless fingers took on a frantic, unaccustomed activity as he delved into one pocket, then another and another, with like useless results.

"Why, Harry dear, you bought them—I saw you."

"Yes, but where are they? I put them in my vest pocket, and they are gone. Oh, well, I'll pay the fare."

He twisted about in his seat and reached in his hip pocket for his pocketbook—and turned a ghost-like face toward Nadine.

His pocketbook was gone. And moreover, the pocket was neatly slashed down one side, as though by the edge of a keen razor, wielded by an experienced hand.

"My tickets, my pocketbook, my watch—I've been robbed!"

The conductor was all sympathy. He saw the ripped pocket, the dangling watch chain. It had been a smooth job. But sympathy would not pay dividends on P. & Q. railroad stock. The next station was Mayville and the trolley would take them right back to the village. They could make the one o'clock car, and the eighty cents in loose change in Harry's one untouched pocket would carry them home again.

Tearfully, very tearfully, a sweet but weary little girl bade good-bye to a dejected, downcast man, at the Harmon doorstep, an hour and a half later. Nadine's key fitted the door perfectly, and not a sound was made. Father would never know. And Nadine crept silently up the stairs to her room, there to cast herself upon the snow-white coverlet of her bed and shed bucketful after bucketful of real tears.

In a secluded den on the second floor at the Harmon home, a shaded light cast a brilliant gleam over a little table.

On the table was heaped an incongruous assortment. There lay a heavy, well-worn black cap, a scraggly moustache, a keen-edged knife.



And loosely scattered over all were bills of all denominations—currency—real coin of the realm.

"One hundred, two hundred, three hundred, three twenty-five, forty-five, fifty, fifty-five, six, seven—and tickets for the city. My, they were going to have some trip!" chuckled a short, thick, heavy-set man who, throughout the daytime, sat in the office of president of the village bank, behind doors upon which were emblazoned the words, "John Harmon, Pres."

Carefully, the banker folded the bills and placed them, together with a bejeweled gold, but chainless watch, in a russet leather pocketbook. Therein he also placed two railroad tickets, both torn almost in halves.

On the back of the pocketbook were the initials, "H. S."

The next day, Harry Shagrue received by special delivery a heavy package. In it was a russet leather pocketbook, with the initials "H. S." engraved thereon. In the pocketbook was a gold, bejeweled, chainless watch, \$357 in bills, and two badly mutilated tickets from the village to the city.

There was also a card. It read:—

"A reformed pickpocket."

Nadine, the next day, pondered as father chuckled when the green imp shrieked.

"Awk-awk! I'll be back at midnight."

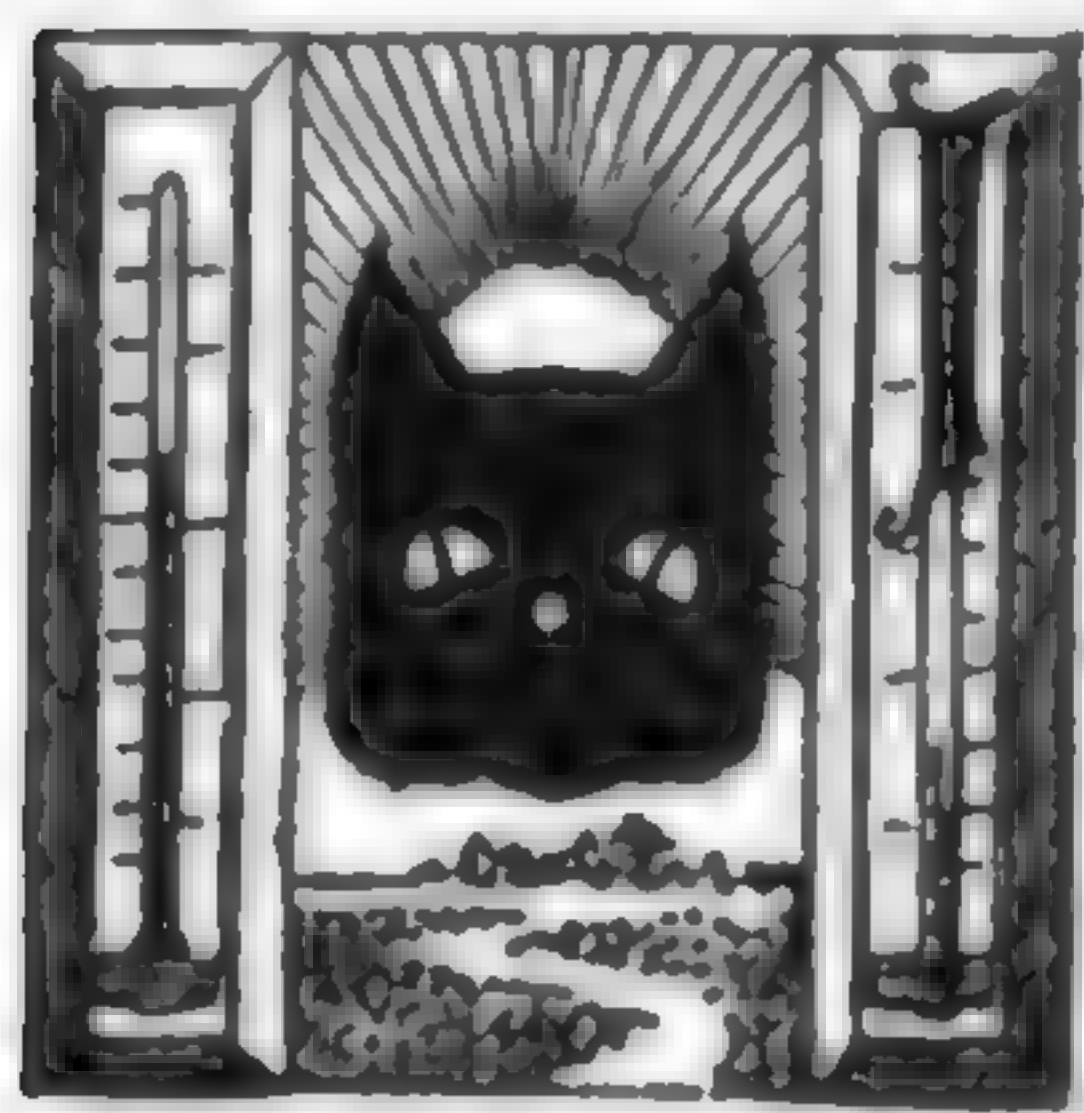




# The Loyalty of Sergeant Wilkes

BY WILLIAM ADAMS SIMONDS

*The subtlety of this ingenious story makes a hint at its plot dangerous to the interest of story. It's a battle of wits between two detectives.*



INSPECTOR Sheridan looked up from his mass of photographs and Bertillons and greeted his visitor.

"Ah, Sergeant,"

he said, "I suppose you are ready to report on the Grummer case. Good! Sit down; I have been expecting you."

Sergeant Wilkes seated himself carefully and deliberately. In his wide babylike eyes there was a wearied look, which was accentuated by the glare of the green-shaded lights. Lack of sleep showed in the lines of his face, in his manner, as he took out his notebook slowly and thumbed the pages.

As the inspector guessed—he had come to detail the results of his three days' investigation into the strange murder of Paul Grummer. He filled his pipe and lighted it before proceeding, for in the sanctum of "Happy Jack" Sheridan, big, broad, good-natured police official, many things were permitted which other inspectors denied.

"I can't say," he began finally, "that I've cleared up the whole thing yet, but I think I've located the man. You remember the primary facts surrounding the case, I suppose; and the peculiar manner in which the body was found."

The inspector nodded.

"The body lay, you recall, in a vacant lot on Clemmer street," Wilkes went on. "A milkman stumbled over it at early dawn while crossing the lot to reach the rear of the house next door. It was a few feet off the sidewalk—five feet, to be exact, for I measured it."

"That was about four o'clock in the morning, if I recollect," the inspector interposed.

"Yes; just at daybreak. No one in the neighborhood knew Grummer; we identified him by means of some worn letters in his pocket. That was about all we found, except a ring bearing a few keys and some small coins. Apparently, he was almost broke.

"There was no sign of a struggle: not a bruise or wound or even trace of blood on the corpse. It seemed to me like a case of heart failure when I first took up the threads. The body lay there stiff and cold; the doctors said death must have come at least four hours previous."

"I am familiar with the case so far. Heart failure it seemed to me, too, from what I heard of it. What led you to think differently?"

"There were several things. Chief among them was the manner in which the body lay, five feet from the sidewalk. If it had been a natural death,



I argued, the man would have fallen where he stood, or close at hand. Certainly he would not have been wandering across a dark, vacant lot at midnight, some distance from the path!"

"I believe you're right in that. But how do you think he was killed?"

"I haven't determined that yet, Inspector. We searched the vicinity, but couldn't find a weapon of any description. It occurred to me that perhaps he had been murdered elsewhere and the body carted there. If so, I felt that someone beside the actual slayer must know of the deed. Inquiry showed that no vehicle had stopped near the spot on the preceding night."

He consulted his notes.

"As I said, there were a couple of worn letters in his pocket. From them we got his name and also his address—the Paris—a cheap lodging house. As you know, it's not a hang-out for dips—respectable enough, but low-class. The landlord identified him right away and took us to his room.

"There was nothing unusual about the place: four walls, a bed and a washstand. In the top drawer—the only drawer—of the stand we found a few articles: tablet, pencil, shirt and some handkerchiefs. His mode of living, we learned, was simple; he spent much of his time in his room, and occasionally went out for long absences. He was a close-mouthed fellow, saying little."

Sheridan wheeled to his desk abruptly and jotted down a memorandum.

"When did they first see Grum-

mer?" he asked over his shoulder.

"They said he came there about two months ago. We couldn't find out anything as to where he hailed from or who his relatives were. You see, he never mentioned anything about them—quite a character, this Grummer.

"It was hard to determine his exact age, as he looked worn out. They placed him at thirty-six, but he might have been as young as thirty. From the little he did let drop, they gathered that he had been used to considerable money once.

"Nobody ever came to see him, so far as the landlord knew. That is, no one except a messenger-boy who came on the night Grummer met his death. Grummer must have called him; at any rate, he came early in the evening, around eight o'clock I think, and left very soon afterward. Some two hours later, Grummer also went out, and that was the last they saw of him."

"Of course you found the messenger-boy?"

"Yes; we looked for him next. He had been in uniform, so it wasn't very hard to locate him."

Again he looked at his notes.

"Frankie Windmueller is his name; he works at an office not far from the Paris. He checked the call up on his book and remembered it besides. A party named Grummer had called for a boy to deliver a message and he responded.

"There was one peculiar thing about that note. The address given the boy was on Clemmer street, two blocks from where the milkman stumbled over Grummer. In short,



it was the address of your home, Inspector!"

Inspector Sheridan stared. The dark grey eyes lost their twinkle for a moment, while a look of deep surprise filled them.

"Impossible!" he exclaimed. "You are mistaken, Wilkes."

"No, Inspector; the number was 4406. That's your number, isn't it?"

"Yes," Sheridan admitted, but——"

"The note," Wilkes hastened to add, "was addressed to Frederick A. Gibbs. Gibbs at that time, you know, was engaged to marry your sister, Miss Geraldine. Excuse me for mentioning that, as I know it must be distasteful to you, since Gibbs broke it off. But it's in the case and I've got to report it."

"That's all right," the inspector declared, "go on. Tell me everything."

"As I say, Grummer's note was for Gibbs. Why he sent it to your house I don't make out, unless he happened to know that Gibbs was calling there that night. That's correct, isn't it?"

"Um-m-m—let me see. Yes, he was; that was the night they broke the engagement. Singular coincidence, isn't it?"

"Yes, it is rather—if you'll excuse the remark. Do you know the reason it was broken?"

"It was just an ordinary lover's quarrel, as I understand it; those things will happen sometimes, you know. Of course we didn't hear about it until the next day, when we read it in the papers."

"Are you sure that was the real reason?"

"Yes; at least, that's what she said.

Why? What makes you ask?"

"There's something strange about it, Inspector, as I'll explain later. The messenger-boy must have got there about eight-thirty, I figure. Gibbs must have answered him. You'll understand my reason for thinking so when you read the note."

Wilkes extracted a crumpled, dirty bit of paper from his book and passed it to Sheridan. The inspector, startled, took it, and looked first at one side and then the other.

"Good work, Sergeant!" he exclaimed. "Where did you find this?"

"It was picked up on the sidewalk halfway between your home and the scene of the murder. Either it had fallen there or been thrown away—probably fallen."

The inspector read the note.<sup>a</sup> It was penned in a hand that was plainly disguised, yet, nevertheless, neat and painstaking.

Mr. Frederick A. Gibbs,

Dear Sir: I have something of grave importance to say to you in view of your approaching marriage to Miss Geraldine Sheridan. I feel that you ought to know it, because I have certain facts to present which will cause you at once to break off your engagement. I come from the town where she lived before she moved here, and know what I'm talking about. If you are interested in your own welfare, meet me tonight at 10.30 o'clock sharp. I will wait for you at Clemmer and Forty-second street.

A Friend

After he had finished reading it, the inspector again examined it carefully, holding it close to the light.

"How do you know this is the note Grummer sent?" he queried.

"I compared it with the tablet we found in his room," Wilkes said. "It's the identical paper. Also, the location is too near the right spot to



just happen so. Forty-second and Clemmer—that's where we found the dead body!"

"What does Gibbs say?"

"He denies ever having seen the note; says he never got it. He told me just what you did, that the engagement had been broken because of a quarrel. He claims he didn't leave your house until eleven o'clock, and that then he went straight to his club. But I'm getting ahead of my report. I must go back."

Sheridan nodded, signifying to Wilkes to tell his story in his own way.

"Naturally, my suspicions turned toward Gibbs. I hate to say these things to you, because of the personal connection, but you understand, I'm only trying to do my duty. I must say, that the further I have gone into this case, the blacker things look for him.

"In the first place, you know his temperament—easily excitable, inclined to be impetuous. Not that he isn't a fine enough young man, and all that; but I think you'll admit that he's just the sort to fly into a passion if anyone tried to slander the name of the girl he loved; especially, when it was a fellow like this Grummer.

"Then there's his actions. He arrived at the club all right, after leaving your home; I can't check up the time exactly, but it was somewhere between eleven and eleven-fifteen o'clock. And what did he do there? He proceeded to get fearfully and shamefully drunk—so bad that they had to call a taxi and send him home.

"The next thing we hear is that the engagement between your sister and

him is busted, when the wedding is only a few weeks away. What's the reason for that? He says it was a quarrel, and so does Miss Geraldine. I'm not disputing your sister's word at all; but here's this note. How are you going to explain that?"

"Gibbs says he never got it. Well, then, who did? He must have got it, for it was addressed to him and delivered at your house while he was there. The man who wrote it is found dead at the spot where he arranged to meet Gibbs. From every standpoint, it looks like a beautiful case. Gibbs, undoubtedly, is the man we want."

"I can't believe it," Sheridan protested. "Fred may be quick-tempered and a bit thoughtless, but he's not the man to murder another in cold blood."

"Not even for the girl he loved?" incredulously.

"No;" the inspector said slowly, "not even for that."

"Of course there are a few things in Gibbs's favor," Wilkes admitted. "He's hardly the man I'd pick out to do a trick like this for one reason—I don't think he's strong enough."

"How was Grummer killed?" Sheridan asked quickly.

"I haven't quite settled that yet, as I said before. I have my theory, but it would take a surgical operation to prove it. You remember the Gerdson case, where old Frank Gerdson was murdered for the diamond stud and the ring that he wore. He was found like Grummer—not a sign of a weapon, not a bloodstain, not a wound. Red Miller owned up to that, you know. He caught the old man in a dark place on the street,



threw one arm around his neck, with the fist tight against the back and the muscles of the biceps under the chin. At the same time, he backed up the old man's head and cut off his wind so that he couldn't holler.

"Then Miller lifted him off his feet by thrusting his hip, as a lever, against Gerdson's side. With his fist still pressed against the back of the neck, he swelled his biceps. Two seconds it took, Inspector, and the old man's neck was broke. It was just the same as if he had been hung by a noose. They garroted Gerdson; and that's the way Grummer met his death!"

A gleam of approval at the sergeant's enthusiasm flashed into the broad-shouldered inspector's eyes.

"But that's pretty hard to prove, isn't it?" he suggested kindly.

"That's the trouble," Wilkes confessed. "The doctors could find it, but they'd have to look for a tiny clot of blood right where the vertebra touches the base of the skull. I understand that's the only sign."

"You certainly don't think Gibbs did it?"

"He's not the man I'd expect to do a job like that. It takes a strong man and an expert, for it's got to be quick or the victim will break loose if he can and make an outcry."

"And Gibbs is not an expert."

"No, I wouldn't think so. Neither are his arms big enough. Of course, if he didn't do it, the case falls flat. He must be the man!"

"You said there were some points in his favor," Sheridan reminded him.

"Yes, there are—a few. For one thing, the messenger-boy can't iden-

tify him positively as the man who got the note. If he could, the case would be cinched. Frankie says the porch was dark, and he didn't make out the fellow's features. He swears that he found the right number, as directed, and made inquiry before handing over the note. The party who answered, he claims, replied that he was the man.

"At the same time he don't recognize Gibbs now, for we tried him. Of course that doesn't necessarily mean anything, one way or the other.

"Then there's the testimony of Miss Geraldine. I took the liberty of talking with her this morning, so as to round up every loose corner before turning in my report. She says Gibbs left about eleven o'clock that night; and corroborates him in regard to the quarrel. It was a mighty delicate subject, so I didn't press it very far.

"She doesn't recall his going to the door during the evening. It seems they were in the music room about eight-thirty o'clock, and she was playing the piano, according to her recollection. He might have gone out and returned without her knowing it, as from the piano she couldn't see the place where he sat. He was over by the window—you know how the room is arranged.

"Miss Geraldine seemed a bit nervous when I called, but I laid it to the trouble she's been in over the engagement."

"Sis is badly broken up," Sheridan admitted.

"I suppose she must be. It might have been my fancy, but I thought as I sat there, that she was relieved over something, too; maybe she was glad to be rid of Gibbs."



"No, I don't agree with you;" the inspector interrupted. "She thought the world and all of him!"

"Well, I know I'm not much when it comes to figuring about a woman," Wilkes deplored. "They're too deep for me! But Miss Geraldine's testimony don't hurt Gibbs one bit. I can't reconcile it with his subsequent acts; the circumstances are certainly against him.

"He's my one best bet," he concluded, although of course different theories might be suggested. But if the dope against him won't stand the test, I don't see any other practical solution."

"Let's hear some of your other suggestions," Sheridan directed.

"They're hardly worth bothering you about," the sergeant demurred, apologetically, "and certainly not in any official report. I wouldn't mention them at all if you would listen to my theory on Gibbs. Sometimes I find, when I'm working on a case, that it's a good idea to decide on as many various possibilities as I can, and then eliminate all except the probability. Once in a while I hit upon some mighty interesting things.

"Look at this Grummer case: What if the messenger-boy went to Number 4604 instead of 4406? Or to 4046? Such would not be beyond the bounds of possibility. When one has studied Frankie Windmueller, a stunt like that becomes almost a probability. He's a trifle worse than the average boy in the business; I tested him by having a friend of mine send him on an errand and check him up. He not only got the names entirely mixed up, but also lost his message.

"If I wasn't going to handle the prosecution of the murderer of Grummer, I would work on the belief that the secret to the whole affair lies in this here little messenger-boy. But what can you do? He stoutly maintains that he went to the right place, found the right party, and delivered Grummer's note. You can't shake him either; for he's just wise enough to understand the importance to himself of the matter.

"So I investigated both 4604 and 4046 Clemmer street, Inspector; and especially 4046. You see that's just two blocks on the other side from Forty-second crossing where Grummer was found dead. The fact that the note was found between Forty-second and your house, however, would almost cut out any other locality unless one was dealing with an unusually clever and desperate criminal.

"I don't believe we have such in this case. Everything seems to point to the theory that Grummer was killed in a heated passion, by someone who was angry at an attempted slander or blackmail. I have framed this explanation and this motive from the note itself. And without going into details, I might say that I discovered that both those other addresses could be eliminated safely.

"There were other interesting conjectures. One, if you will excuse the reference, was that someone in your house, perhaps in your family, might have got the note instead of Gibbs. Of course, Inspector," he interjected hurriedly, "I'm merely outlining to you my different avenues of thought in trailing the affair to



Gibbs—I'm not presuming for a minute to say that any of them are true."

"I understand," said Sheridan. He smiled reassuringly at his inferior. "I won't be offended. Go on; you interest me."

Pleased at the inspector's approval, Wilkes elaborated his idea.

"Some things would have to be assumed under such a possibility—things which might seem unpardonable. For instance, we would have to work on the belief that Miss Geraldine had been preyed upon by this Grummer, who knew, or claimed to know, something of her former life which she dreaded. Shall I proceed?"

From the distant corridor a gong sounded, followed instantly by the shuffling of many feet. Shifts were changing; and in the medley of noises Sheridan's voice sounded faint and far away.

"Certainly, Sergeant; do so by all means."

"This Grummer may have followed her here, when he learned of her approaching marriage to Gibbs, and threatened her with exposure—tried to blackmail her. Such a thing would have worried her terribly. It might have been known to the other members of her family, or again, it might not. It probably would not be, although it's not really material.

"When Grummer found that she was determined not to listen to him, he may have decided, out of revenge, to break up the marriage. With that in view, he sends the note to Gibbs, and addresses it to Miss Geraldine's own home.

"Such a move would be devilish, for he might hope that Gibbs would

read it in the girl's presence, and then, when she was confronted with the fulfillment of Grummer's threats, she might be compelled to treat with him.

"Here's where the messenger-boy would enter into the story. Suppose that he had been told to ask, before delivering his note: 'Does Mr. Sheridan live here?'

"That would be to make sure that he was at the right place. If he got an affirmative answer, he might have been instructed next to inquire: 'Is Mr. Frederick A. Gibbs here?'

"If he was told 'yes' to this also, then his orders might have been to turn over the note forthwith.

"Now imagine what would happen if he got the names mixed up and some member of the family came to the door. First he would ask: 'Does Mr. Frederick A. Gibbs live here?'

"The question would probably seem a joke to the person, whoever it was, and he might laugh a bit. Half-humorously he might say something like this: 'Mr. Gibbs? Well, he does—most of the time!'

"Then Frankie would speak up: 'Is Mr. Sheridan here?'

"If the person who was answering the bell happened to be your father, or—pardon me—even yourself, the reply might be: 'That's me.'

"Then the note might be handed in, and whoever received it might read it innocently before realizing its import, or that it was meant for someone else. Shall I proceed?"

Inspector Sheridan by this time betrayed his deep interest in the novel theory that his sergeant expounded. He leaned forward in his big chair



and followed closely every word. He frowned at the interruption.

"Why should you stop, Wilkes? Let's have the rest of it!"

"Well, under the circumstances I have just set out, there wouldn't be much left to tell. After reading the note, the person who got it would, of course, make up his mind to go out and see what this fellow had on his mind.

"He would meet Grummer, hear things which would seem the grossest lies, and then perhaps reveal his identity. He would tell Grummer that if he ever repeated those things again, he would kill him. The fellow might bluster; might refuse to obey; might even attempt to get some more money.

"There would probably be a scuffle and a blow would be struck. Then, before he realized it, our man's passions might be getting the better of him; he undoubtedly thought everything of Miss Geraldine and her happiness. In a flash, his hip would be against Grummer's side, his arm around the man's throat. Before he could break loose from the fury that mastered him, there would be a choking, guttural sound, and Grummer would relax in his arms."

Sheridan, his face immobile, sat like one in a trance. His heavy jaw rested on the palm of his hand; his eyes met those of Wilkes without flickering an eyelash.

"Why did you eliminate that possibility also, Sergeant?"

The question was crisp, sharp.

"Well, Inspector," Wilkes laughed, "I never seriously considered it. There were only your father and—yourself, in the family; and your father, while

a big man, has not now the necessary strength. You would qualify as to build,"—he looked his chief over critically—"but of course you would have to be dropped at the outset. Your nature is such—you know what I mean—that you would be the last one in the world to lose your temper, to do such a thing. Then, too, are you not inspector of the police?"

"Of course," replied Sheridan.

Wilkes closed his notebook and rose to his feet wearily.

"Under the circumstances," he said, "I suppose there is nothing to do but to call it heart failure."

"I suppose so," the inspector agreed, still leaning forward on the edge of his desk.

"Just the same, I would like to find out who did it," Wilkes admitted. "I forgot to mention another thing in Gibbs's favor which would undoubtedly help to clear him. When we examined Grummer's body, we found some small pieces of cuticle under his finger nails."

"During the struggle, his arms were pinned above his head, but apparently he managed to scratch his assailant, while he was clawing around helplessly, before the muscles crushed against his neck. And Gibbs bore no marks of any sort. I inspected him myself."

"I guess that settles it, then," Sheridan said.

He relaxed from his tense position, lifting his jaw from the hand on which it had been propped, and withdrawing his arm.

As he did so, his coat-sleeve caught on the desk and pulled back. It revealed four strips of black court-



plaster extending lengthwise along the forearm almost to the wrist.

The big blue eyes of the sergeant seemed to widen a trifle, but the expression, whatever it was, flitted instantly.

Inspector Sheridan replaced the sleeve carelessly and glanced at Wilkes. He found the officer staring abstractedly out of the window at the cluster-lights along the avenue.

When he spoke, the sergeant roused himself with a visible effort.

"Heart failure, you said?"

"Yes, Chief."

"That's all just now, Sergeant. I'll call you if I want you."

"All right, Chief."

Sergeant Wilkes touched his hat and smiled cheerfully. A second later, the door closed noiselessly behind him.

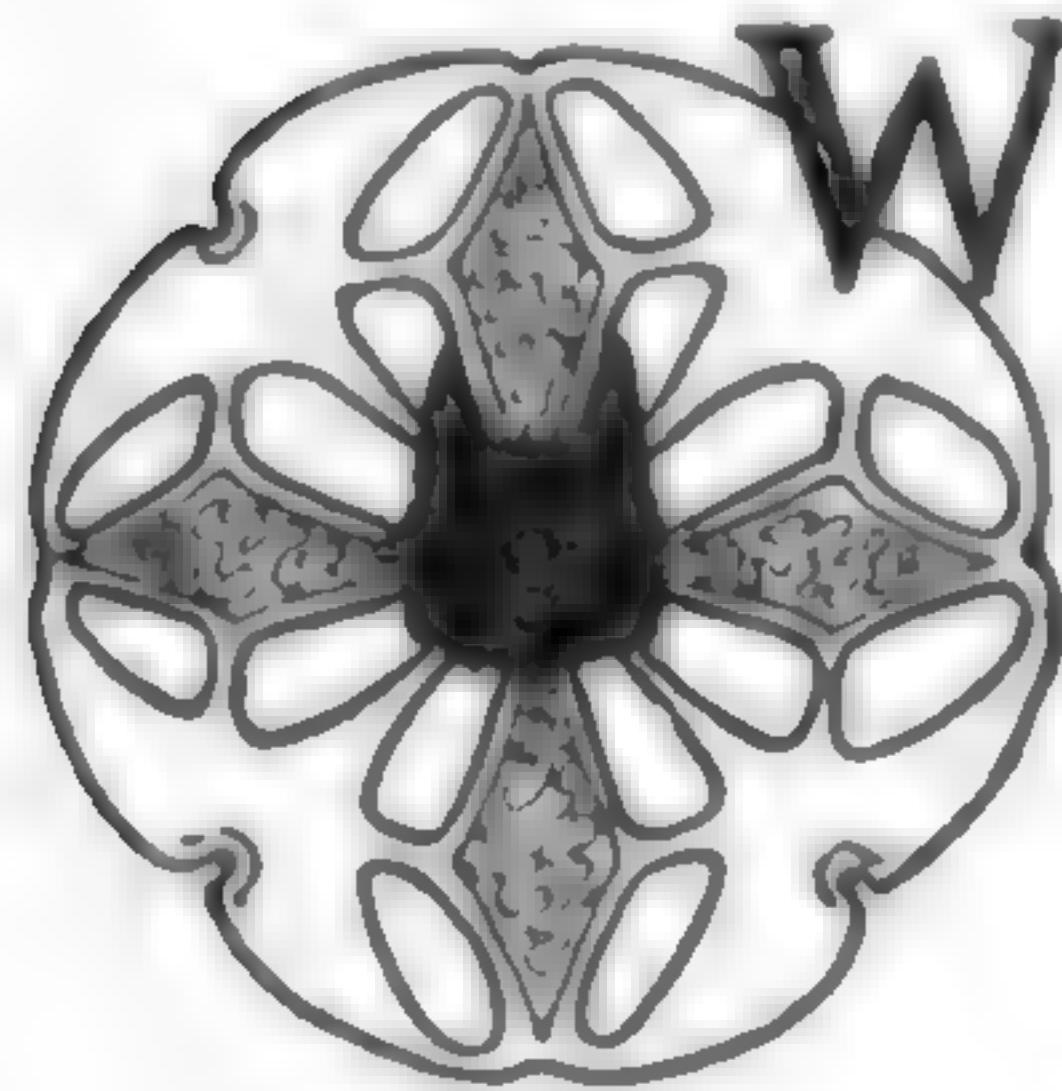




# Eva at Long Range

BY JESSIE E. HENDERSON

*Two wireless operators, one "red-haired and plump," began a wireless flirtation. The S. O. S. scream of a wounded and wallowing ship brings them together and spices with thrills a story full of laughs.*



WHEN Armstrong, the new wireless operator on the *Clio*, picked up Beachey Head each trip between New York and Havana, he used to exchange weather comments and baseball news with that post, as he did with the other operators at the coast wireless stations. And he used to begin many of his messages with "SA-OM," which means "Say, Old man—"

This touched the pride of the operator at Beachey Head. So one night when the *Clio* was ploughing northward under the big stars some hundred miles off shore, and Armstrong had preceded an observation about the temperature with his customary "SA-OM," Beachey Head interrupted rather pertly:

"MCF," which was the official title of Beachey Head, "NOT-OM."

A moment of silence followed this crackle of crisp Morse through the darkness. Of course the remark defied orders against "talking" except on business. But nearly all wireless operators are human, especially when business is dull.

The operator at Beachey Head tapped the key again. "IM-OLD-WOMAN," she added, by way of humorous explanation.

Evidently the *Clio* required a good deal of time to think the matter over. The call was dimmed by distance when later in the evening it slipped between a message from the *Arcady* and a query from Norfolk. But the message, though faint, brought a blush to the cheeks of Beachey Head as it clicked against her eardrums.

"HOW-OLD?" Armstrong inquired, not without pertness himself.

Beachey Head recognized this as a good-natured dig permitted by wireless freemasonry. But she considered it no harm to keep a man at his distance, even when the man was invisible and the distance about two hundred miles. So she tapped an answer of dignified irrelevance:

"GOOD-NIGHT."

If the *Clio* wanted to find out the age of MCF night operator, or anything else concerning her, she reflected that this would be an easy thing to do. Probably Armstrong had been the only wireless man in the regular fleet which steamed past the Head, who did not know that a woman was installed there. When she outranked all the men applicants in the examinations two years ago and received a post on the barren little wind-swept cliff as her reward, an explosion of astonishment had burst up and down the Atlantic seaboard. There were plenty of opera-



tors who could supply the *Clio* with details.

Armstrong apparently discovered a source of information. Twelve days later, as he picked up Beachey Head again on his way south, he called:

"SA-YL-CONGRATS!"

Beachey Head interpreted "YL" to mean "Young Lady," but sent a puzzled question: "WHY-CONGRATS?" For "congrats" meant "congratulations."

"CONGRATS-ON-RATS," clicked the *Clio*.

Beachey Head laughed aloud. So they had told him about her valiant battle. On an "off" night she had regaled some of the coastwise operators with an account of the mouse that invaded her office.

"HOW-IS-GINGER?" Armstrong inquired. Ginger was the cat imported after the mouse incident.

"GINGER-FINE," Beachey Head responded.

They exchanged barometer readings and other wireless "chicken feed" provided for by law. Then Armstrong teasingly repeated his query of twelve days ago: "HOW-OLD?"

Beachey Head answered promptly: "ABOUT-SIX-MONTHS."

"WHAT?" asked the *Clio*.

"GINGER-SIX-MONTHS," said Beachey Head.

A patter of messages from other vessels interrupted the two-hundred mile conversation. But after an hour or so, the *Clio* found a chance to get in a reply: "NOT-GINGER."

Beachey Head relayed a message to Boston before she answered with

a mischievous smile: "NINETY-FIVE-YEARS."

"GOOD-NIGHT!" said the *Clio*.

Twelve days later, the steamer's call buzzed once more in the ears of "MCF," as Armstrong came up from Havana. "SA-YL—" Then a pause, followed by "HOW-ARE-YOU-MISS-EVA-KNOX?"

"FINE-THANKS-MISTER-ALBERT-ARMSTRONG," replied Beachey Head. For she, too, had sources of information upon which to draw.

From New York, Armstrong sent Miss Knox a picture postcard showing the *Clio* under way. From Havana, he sent a second card with a picture of Morro Castle. Miss Knox mailed him a picture postcard of the Beachey Head station. Armstrong sent Miss Knox his photograph. She sent him hers.

"SA-YL," began Armstrong on his next trip south. But Beachey Head paid no attention. She was listening to the call of the *Arcady*, on its way northward from Porto Rico.

"CAPTAIN-SENDS-LOVE-LITTLE-GIRL," came the message, thrice-repeated, from the *Arcady* aerial.

"BEST-LOVE," responded Beachey Head.

The *Clio* steamed onward, mute.

When the twelve days were gone and the *Clio* spoke again to Beachey Head, Armstrong carefully avoided any reference to the previous acquaintance. This policy, though he knew it not, told the Beachey Head operator a number of illuminating things. Among the rest, it told her that Armstrong's pride, or some-



thing, had prevented his making inquiries about the *Arcady*. She bit her lip as the *Clio* passed beyond range with no remark more personal than a baseball score. It had been pleasant to chaff across the waves with an operator who had a sense of humor, but if Mr. Albert Armstrong wanted to suppose—well, let him suppose, then.

His suppositions had apparently restored his temper, for when the *Clio* call came to Beachey Head as the steamer returned from New York, it began with a friendly "SA-YL," and ended with: "HOW-IS-YOUR-CAT?"

"FINE," replied Beachey Head, and added daringly: "DID-YOUR-GOAT-COME-BACK?"

The *Clio* asked for a repetition of the message.

"NEVER-MIND," replied Beachey Head.

The *Clio* insisted.

Business was slack that night, anyway. "I-THOUGHT-SOME-ONE-GOT-YOUR-GOAT," Beachey Head ventured saucily.

Many miles the *Clio* steamed toward Havana before Armstrong, with burning face, decided to answer the impudent message. His inquiries had elicited a tantalizing semi-information. "WHO-IS-CAPTAIN-KNOX-OF-THE-ARCADY?" he clicked at last.

"HA!" spluttered Beachey Head. In the Morse code "HA" stands for "ha, ha!"

"YOUR-BROTHER?" persisted the *Clio*.

"FATHER," answered Beachey Head.

Armstrong's next note was given up to the regret that he could not leave the *Clio* long enough for a run down to Beachey Head. MCF did not answer this letter until the *Clio* came within earshot again. Then she said: "I-HAVE-RED-HAIR-ANYWAY."

The response was not so far beside the mark as it might appear. Miss Knox's photograph had not disclosed to Armstrong the fact that her hair was red. It had long been a sensitive point with her. She had tried to mention it, casually, in her notes, but never could seem to make the mention casual enough.

"I-LIKE-RED-HAIR," the *Clio* answered with a promptness that sent a glow to Beachey Head's heart and also to her face under its mane of ruddy curls. "Chicken feed" from other vessels and from other stations drifted between Armstrong and Miss Knox for some hours. Then Beachey Head caught the *Clio* buzz again, afar off and not very clear.

"I-HAVE-FR——"

Beachey Head asked for a repetition.

A brisk thunderstorm over New Jersey blurred the *Clio's* message, but Armstrong tried once more. Very slowly he tapped out the last word: "F-R-E-C-K-L-E-S."

Miss Knox bubbled a little laugh and glanced into the eyes of the photograph propped up on her desk. Then she turned crimson. Every listening operator within range had registered a simultaneous "HA" against her eardrums.

Armstrong's letter from New York informed her that he was trying to get leave of absence in order to visit



Beachey Head. But when the *Clio* picked up MCF on its way south again, Miss Knox had a long message to sandwich between storm warnings and stock market slumps. Her father had been transferred from the *Arcady* to the *Madelina*, and the *Madelina* would start next week on a fourteen-thousand-mile trip down through the straits of Magellan and up the Pacific Coast as far as Seattle, to enter the Alaskan trade. Miss Knox, by dint of much wire-pulling, had obtained the post of operator on her father's vessel.

"DO-NOT-GO," clicked the *Clio*.

Beachey Head clicked back: "MAY-NEVER-GET-ANOTHER-SUCH-CHANCE."

"PLEASE-DO-NOT-GO," the *Clio* repeated.

"WHY-NOT?" inquired Beachey Head.

"BECAUSE——" began the *Clio*, and did not finish the sentence. They had never met. It was absurd, of course. On the other hand, there is only one sentiment that thrives on impediments—and everyone knows what absence makes the heart do. Before Armstrong went out of range he suggested that at the *Madelina's* first stopping-place Miss Knox ought to watch for an important letter from Havana.

"YOU-BET!" snickered the eavesdropper down by Norfolk. The *Clio* abruptly ceased sending. But after a long interval, it called one last message, that had to travel over a great space of black water before it finally collided with the aerial at Beachey Head and slid down into Miss Knox's ears.

MCF sighed as she heard the message. It said—briefly: "SEE-YOU-LATER."

In due time the *Madelina* steamed out of New York harbor. She was a very old boat that had been repaired, repainted and renamed by a parsimonious firm, and sent forth to discover what she could earn in her declining years. The *Madelina* carried no passengers and but a scanty crew on the trip to Seattle. Therefore she did not need an assistant wireless operator such as passenger boats are required by law to take, and Miss Knox shared with Ginger the undisputed possession of the wireless office on the deck. The operator settled herself comfortably before the rows of bright metal handles and sent her first report to the owners, as the *Madelina* plodded down the coast.

It was the week of the Four-day hurricane, which is still mentioned with respect by Atlantic mariners, and on the second day out the old *Madelina* poked its nose into the thick of the gale. The deck was laden with coal in accordance with the owners' scheme of frugality, and the steamer slouched heavily through the solid green walls that flung themselves against the bow. Things were pretty topsy-turvy in the wireless cabin. Mr. Armstrong's photograph had to be tacked to the woodwork to keep it from diving under the table. More than once the white tip of a comber toppled over the rail and licked past the cabin door.

And one midnight, somewhere among the boiling seas off Cape Hatteras, the *Madelina* began falling to



pieces. Two plates strained apart a little above the waterline on the port side. Every time the *Madelina* rolled the split grew wider. As she dipped to port, the plates closed, but when she reeled to starboard, the seam wrenched open high in air and crest after crest hurled its tons of water against her gaping side.

At half past two in the morning Miss Knox awoke from a troubled sleep, to find her father in the wireless cabin. She sprang from her bunk with a start, bewildered by the crash of gale and waters in the hurrying darkness that pounded upon the cabin windows.

"See if you can get in touch with any vessel," her father suggested.

Miss Knox steadied herself against her bunk as the floor dropped slantwise from beneath her feet with the roll of the steamer. She reached for the sending key, but her father laid a hand gently on her shoulder and cleared his throat. His eyes glistened under the visor of his rubber cap. "I mean——" he began, and choked.

Miss Knox patted his hand, her lips blanching. "Shall I S.O.S.?" she asked, after a long moment.

The captain's face grew gray. It is not pleasant for an old man to admit that he cannot save his own ship; but he nodded.

There came a tearing noise of the spark, as the call for immediate help crackled from the *Madelina* aerial. It was audible even through the howl of the wind. But there was no response.

Miss Knox realized that down below, the men who watched the pumps were wondering if they could depend

on the fingers and ears of the only woman aboard. She felt that they rather doubted whether they could. Trouble might be expected to follow a boat which carried a woman as wireless. Defiantly she tapped the key again. Another blue spark crackled from the masthead and fled across the ocean, searching out another masthead with inviting antennæ. It seemed a long while before a dull gray light dispersed the blackness of the world and stole in at the cabin window. It presaged another stormy day. Minute by minute she called, while the sea rushed into the *Madelina*.

Now and then an officer from below came to the cabin door. "Got anyone yet?" he would inquire.

"Not yet," Miss Knox replied, with a coolness assumed for the occasion. She did not look up as her aching wrist continued to tap the key. The roar of water and wind was deafening.

At last the chief engineer arrived, panting. "Better get some one quick, Miss Knox—if you get 'em at all."

"Why?" asked the operator.

"Water's creeping up to the dynamo," the chief explained.

Miss Knox half rose from her chair. But she sat down again quickly. It would not do to get flustered.

"When the water gets to the dynamo, the wireless won't last long," the chief proceeded with unnecessary definiteness. He wiped the sweat from his forehead with one big hand.

"How about the storage battery—the auxiliary?" asked Miss Knox.

"Not first class," replied the chief laconically; "might last a few hours."



"Wrap something around the dynamo," Miss Knox urged. "Got any canvas?"

The chief vanished, but after a little while he reappeared. "Water's got the dynamo," he reported; "you're on the storage battery now."

"All right," said the operator, who had to shout in order to be heard, and threw him a ghastly little smile as she pressed down the key again.

The chief gazed at her in frank admiration. "I been through worse blows than this," he lied gallantly; "there's no need to be frightened."

"I'm not," said the operator. She could lie as gallantly as anyone. But she rather overdid it when she added, "I've seen bigger surf at Beachey Head."

Lower and lower, the *Madelina* settled, shivering as the waves beat against her wounded side. Long ago the last bag of coal had been swept over the rail, but the old craft was too far gone to feel any relief from the lightening of her burden. The engine rooms were afloat, and the greatest exertion of the pumps could not check the tide that rose nearer the furnace grates. Upward the water lapped—a sixteenth of an inch—an eighth. There was little to be hoped from the lifeboats in this weather. The *Madelina* could not live till sunset.

For fifty minutes the white-lipped operator sent the "S.O.S." It hissed in vain across a wild waste of leaden billows that rose and fell with monotonous violence underneath the leaden clouds. Then Miss Knox began to get blurred fragments from vessels a long way off. Fatally distant they

were, these craft that tried to catch her message and to send coherent replies through the blanket of "static" that clogged the air.

Half a dozen confused calls ran into each other and defeated their own purpose. From the resultant jangle Miss Knox thought she could pick out the stronger buzz of a land station near Charleston, which seemed to be dispatching a revenue cutter to the *Madelina's* assistance. Miss Knox gave a grim laugh. It was strange to drown with the knowledge that a small fleet was hurrying to one's aid. She did not deceive herself. Any vessel that was too far away for unbroken communication was too far away for any use.

"They won't even be in time for the funeral," she thought, with a tiny shudder.

It is a good law which requires passenger steamers to carry two wireless operators, so that the switchboard may never be vacant. But the law does not suggest any remedy when the assistant operator contracts fever and retires, delirious, to his bunk. This is what had happened on the nearest steamer, which rolled along—deaf and mute—some ninety miles away. The first operator was weary. He planned to sleep late. But the delirious cries of his assistant in the stateroom next door woke him. Idly he "listened" at his instrument. And he heard something.

It was the faint, far click of the *Madelina's* drowning cry:

"S.O.S.!—S.O.S.!—S.—O.—S.—"

Back to the ears of the *Madelina* operator came presently a small "qrrk—quorrk—qrrk." It sounded like a



pin-scratch on paper but it meant that the *Clio* was ready to change her course and start with all speed to the rescue.

Would the wireless work long enough to give the *Clio* directions? Miss Knox put the question from her with a determined pressure of the lips.

"WHERE - ARE - YOU?" asked the *Clio*.

The *Madelina* gave her position by dead reckoning. Because of the cloudy weather no sun observations had been taken for several days, and therefore the *Madelina* was not sure of her location.

"BE-MORE-DEFINITE," replied the *Clio*.

"IMPOSSIBLE," was the *Madelina's* brief response.

For several seconds the *Clio's* wireless maintained a significant silence. It is not an easy job to find a sinking vessel in thick weather, distance uncertain, direction problematical. Then Captain Knox had an inspiration, which he communicated to the captain of the *Clio*.

His daughter tapped out the message:

"SUPPOSE-WE-TAKE-GREENWICH-TIME - ON - OUR - CHRONOMETERS - BOTH - TAKE - IT - AT-SAME-MOMENT. THEN-EXCHANGE-READINGS."

The captain of the *Clio* suggested a set of signals. "PUT-MAN-OUTSIDE-YOUR-CABIN," he said. "WHEN - YOU - WAVE - YOUR - HANDS - AS - YOU-READ-CHRONOMETER-LET-HIM-PASS-ON-SIGNAL - TO - MAN - OUTSIDE - WIRELESS - ROOM-THEN-LET-THIS-MAN-SIGNAL-OPERATOR

AND - I - WILL - DO - SAME."

Very soon, the man who balanced on the slippery deck outside Miss Knox's cabin, gave a shout—"Now!" Miss Knox sent a swift message to the *Clio* and heard the *Clio* buzz at her ears. In a few moments the *Clio* knew the *Madelina's* longitude and guessed at her latitude.

"AM-STEERING - FOR-YOUR-APPROXIMATE - POSITION," said the captain of the *Clio*.

"WILL - STEER - TOWARD-YOU," replied Captain Knox.

The two vessels started blindly for each other through the curling seas. In the dark weather, either of them might get ten miles to one side. This meant that the two would pass without knowing it. Miss Knox drew a deep breath. There was nothing but guesswork now.

Once each minute, the wireless cabins spoke, ignoring the cloud of fainter buzzes from ships that would come too late. Indeed, there seemed scant hope of the *Clio* arriving in time. Miss Knox hinted this doubt.

"PLENTY - TIME," Armstrong replied, and then after a moment: "ARE-YOU-SCARED?"

"NO," crackled Miss Knox—an answer which did not fool Armstrong any more than it had fooled the chief engineer. She added: "BUT-GINGER-IS."

"HA," buzzed the *Clio*. Somehow, the Morse laughter gave Miss Knox new courage.

The *Clio* came at top speed, as fast as the coal could be stoked and converted into steam. The floundering *Madelina* did her best. When Miss Knox glanced out of her window



again, she saw that it was broad day—a cloudy, threatening day of gray and green. Hours must have passed since the steamer's first call for help. It would be hours more before the *Clio's* smoke blew across the horizon. But with each hour the *Clio's* call grew stronger as Armstrong came nearer. There was a flutter in Miss Knox's throat that did not arise from peril. They had never seen each other. It was likely that they might never see each other. And yet——

The steward, the first officer, the chief engineer, all visited her cabin during the long forenoon with gifts of sandwiches and coffee. Miss Knox reported the visits to Armstrong.

"TRYING - TO - KEEP - ME - GOOD-TEMPER," she commented. "THEY-NEED - NOT - WORRY-I-WILL - NOT - QUIT - TILL - BATTERY-DOES."

"GOOD-STUFF," said the *Clio*.

But at noon a most disturbing message reached Miss Knox. The *Clio* had reached the spot which the *Madelina* designated as her possible location—and there was no vessel in sight. Dismay gripped the *Madelina* operator, exhausted by her vigil. And at the same moment, the battery that fed the wireless began to lose its strength.

"SLIGHT-ERROR," the *Clio* remarked cheerfully, "MOVE-FORWARD."

The *Madelina* obeyed, wallowing. The wireless cabin tilted toward the bows at a curious angle. Somewhere the *Clio* raced on. Armstrong told Miss Knox that the captain had stationed men aloft, with a promise of a

reward to the first one who sighted the cripple.

"DECK-AWASH," said the *Madelina* at last. The message was faint. And after a considerable interval: "GUESS-GOOD - BYE-NOW-MISTER-ARMSTRONG."

"NO-NO," crackled the *Clio*.

"GUESS-YES," answered the *Madelina*, drearily, "M A N Y-THANKS——"

Armstrong, heedless that all the world might hear him, pounded out a message and sent it at random into the gray void:

"EVA-EVA-EVA——"

There was no reply.

"EVA," the *Clio* called again, "EVA-EVA——"

Into Armstrong's ears came the ghost of an answer.

"D-E-A-R-B——" And silence.

A man at the *Clio* masthead shouted. Feet raced along the deck. The *Clio* wireless blazed another message:

"ARE-YOU-A-WHITE-SHIP?"

Armstrong thought he caught the two taps that signify "yes."

She was head down in the water, the poor old *Madelina*, when the *Clio* edged up to leeward and sent the long-oared lifeboats swirling to her side. Through his glasses, Armstrong saw a group of men on the heaving deck. He noticed a tall officer—the captain—and a woman who would not leave until he did. In her hand she held a bag, which, as Armstrong rightly conjectured, held the frantic Ginger.

There was an eternity of jostling up and down, of perilous dashes toward the half-swamped vessel, and



of fending away from it, before the lifeboats—now swept high on a wave tip, now hurled to the depths of the sea—began their painful journey back to the *Clio*. When they had covered half the distance, the *Madelina* gave a great dive and slowly dropped from sight.

But Armstrong bestowed on the *Madelina* scarcely a glance. He was watching a red-haired, plump little girl, who crouched in one of the boats. As it approached, the girl picked him out, where he stood apart from the group at the rail—and looked up into his eyes.





# Luke McLuke Says

BY J. SYME HASTINGS

It is hard to make a girl believe it in summer, but the only cure for ingrowing calves is an opaque petticoat.

The only time advertising doesn't pay is when you advertise for a wife.

Some men are born mean and others grow up and buy motorcycles.

It might help some if we would let the dogs alone for one summer and muzzle the men.

A man thinks he can throw a fit because the laundry turns the neckband of his shirt into a saw. But he is a mere piker compared with the woman who finds the baby ribbon missing from her corset cover.

Before marriage he can't live without her. After marriage he can't live with her.

The main difference between the costume worn by Eve and some of the costumes worn by her daughters today, is that fig leaves are not transparent.

Most girls are aware that love is blind. That's the reason they put the powder on so thick that you can taste it.

If Temptation is pretty and has a few out curves, a man may flee from her, but he will wait around the corner until she catches up with him.

When a woman has been married long enough she never remembers her wedding anniversary. But she never forgets wash day.

The School of Experience confers but one honor and no man has so far won it. It is a halo to be worn by those who mind their own business.

A girl's idea of hard luck is to have the street car company lower the steps on the cars just about the time she gets the silk stockings she saved up for six months to buy.

The most uncertain thing in the world is a sure thing.

When there are women in an elevator, a bald-headed man thinks that any male person who takes off his hat is a sissy.

When a woman marries a man she can't love, she usually loves a man she can't marry.

A fool man couldn't guess within three inches of the size of a girl's foot by looking at her shoes.

When a man takes his wife to the theatre, he thinks that he goes out between acts. But she thinks he comes in between drinks.

Nowadays, some women imagine they are old-fashioned if they wear the same complexion twice.

When it comes to girls and race horses, you have to play both on form and trust to luck.

When a girl has bony ankles, she gets a lot of comfort out of the reflection that they are not that way farther up.

Everybody but his mother knows that you are a liar, when you say that the baby looks like his father.

The slit and silhouette skirts have given a lot of Prodigal sons the idea that they are veal inspectors.

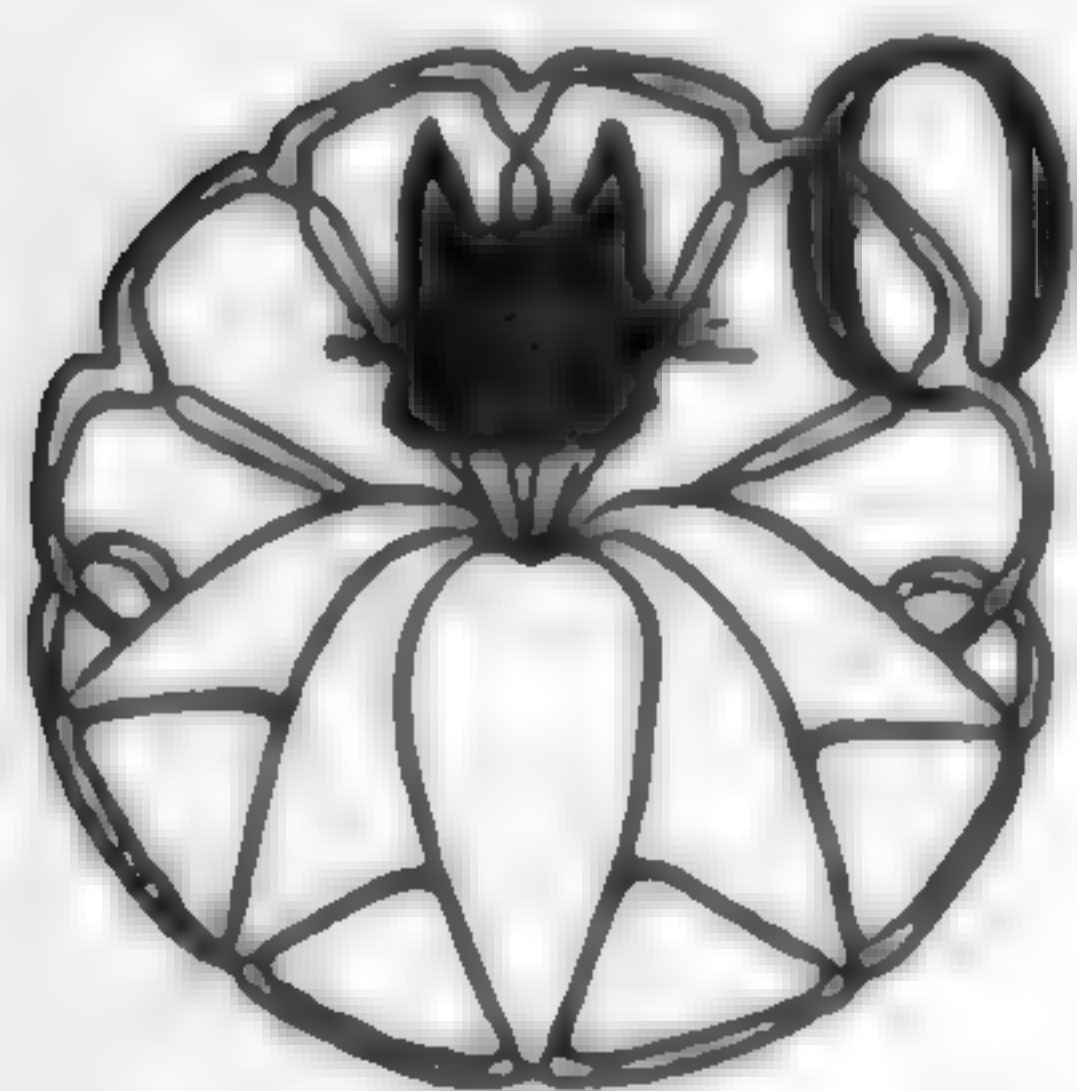
If we could read one another's thoughts, there would be a hospital at every corner.



# A Game of Justice

BY OMAR CHRISTY

*Gun-men of the West still "stick-up" trains in the movies, but this account of a hold-up with Belasco settings is new and refreshingly different.*



OUTSIDE, in the darkness, the rain beat heavily upon the moving train with a dreary monotony that palled on the passengers and made them dull and uncomfortable. It was a two hours' ride to Pocalla, and the occupants of the car settled themselves for the weary ride. A quiet little woman in black, sitting alone, coughed painfully and took a swallow of medicine from a bottle. Coming in from the smoking car, a travelling salesman dropped into a seat beside a large, prosperous-looking Westerner, and opened conversation at random.

"Tough night," he remarked.

"Sure is," returned the Westerner. "Cold rain, too. May be sleet before morning."

"Tough country, also," observed the salesman.

"Yep! Pretty wild around here. Nothing but hills for a hundred miles in every direction."

"Live out here?" the salesman asked.

"I'm sheriff of the next county. My name's Braddon—James Braddon."

"Pleased to meet you, Mr. Braddon," said the other genially. "I'm Wilson, jewelry man. Have a card?"

The sheriff glanced at the address curiously.

"Big firm," he noted. "I suppose you carry pretty valuable samples?"

"Well," Wilson laughed, "I've got a ten state territory."

"Whew!" the sheriff whistled softly. "Aren't you afraid of being robbed?"

A small, sharp-eyed man just behind them leaned forward a little. The old lady coughed harshly again, and changed her position restlessly.

"There are no robbers nowadays," replied the salesman. "All the thieves have turned grafters and made enough money to retire on."

"Oh, I don't know about that," corrected the sheriff. "I'm after a bandit now that held up a Union Southern train down at Fire Peak last week."

The little man behind leaned farther over and touched the sheriff. The big fellow started and looked around quickly. The sharp-eyed person took in every detail of the officer's face in one comprehensive glance.

"Well?" questioned the Westerner.

The other settled back in his seat. "I just wanted to remark," he said, "that the lady opposite has a very bad cough."

The sheriff regarded her attentively. "Indeed she has," he agreed; and as that seemed to be all that was expected of him, he turned back and con-



tinued the conversation with the salesman.

The train sped swiftly on through the rain. The passengers gradually lapsed into silence, some of them dozing, others reading, and the two occupants in front of the little man lowered their tones. There was a short flash of lanterns outside and a vision of wagons and tents, passing as quickly as it appeared.

"That's Willard's construction camp," informed the sheriff. "We're getting into the hills proper now." He hesitated a second. "Would you mind changing seats with me?" he asked.

The salesman moved over to the window, and Braddon seated himself next the aisle.

A few miles farther on, the engine whistled shrilly, and there was a hiss of brakes as the train decreased its speed. In the light from the windows there showed a white sign-post painted with black letters:

DANGER! SLOW DOWN TO  
8 MILES AN HOUR

The old lady started up nervously as the whistle shrieked, and the man behind the officer gripped something in his coat pocket firmly. The sheriff drew his feet closer under him and adjusted his coat very deliberately.

"Devil's Curve," he remarked laconically.

The train wound slowly around the sharp angle of the rails at a pace that was scarcely more than a crawl, and it was not until the last coach was on straight track that the engineer dared to open his throttle. Hardly had the curve been passed when

there was a crash of glass in the vestibule, and a masked man stood in the doorway with a heavy pistol in his hand. With a quick movement, he covered the passengers, waving his free arm significantly.

"Hands up!" he cried. "Every one of you."

There was a quick rustle of surprise, but all obeyed, including the sheriff. The sharp-eyed man sank very low in his seat, but his hands were in the air. He kept his gaze on Braddon, whose right hand suddenly dropped. The bandit's gun clicked ominously as he leveled it full at the officer's face.

"None of that! Put up your arm."

The sheriff hesitated, then raised his hand. To everyone's wonder, the bandit pointed at the jewelry man.

"You first," he said. "Step out."

The salesman did so.

"Walk down the aisle towards me, but keep your hands above your head. Be quick about it!"

When the man was within reach of him, the robber stepped forward and dexterously ran his left hand through the other's clothes, extracting a jewel-case and a roll of bills.

"Go back to your seat," he ordered; then motioned to another passenger. "You're next. Get a move on!"

In like manner he searched the majority of the occupants, taking them one at a time without regard to location, apparently choosing them at random or else with intention. Suddenly he nodded at the Westerner.

"Your turn now. Walk up!"

The officer made his way slowly down the car and stood face to face



with the masked man. The bandit put his gun against his side and thrust his fingers in the other's coat. The car swayed slightly, and the sheriff leaned sideways as if to hold his balance. The outlaw shifted the gun, and instantly the officer struck his arm with such force that the pistol dropped to the floor. The robber struggled, but almost before the onlookers knew what had happened, he was handcuffed and a prisoner.

"Well, I got you this time," grunted the officer, flashing his star.

The passengers dropped their arms with relief. The sharp-eyed man put his hand in his pocket and crept to the edge of the seat.

With a sweep of his arm, the sheriff tore the mask from the bandit's features.

"Let's see your face," he ordered sternly.

There was a sudden scream, and the old lady rose up in her seat.

"It's my son," she cried, "Walter!"

The outlaw sprang back and covered his face. The old lady came down the aisle and touched him.

"Walter, my boy," she said, her voice quivering, "why is this?"

He shrank back, but she caught his arm. The sheriff stepped aside in amazement.

"What in thunder!" ejaculated the officer. "Is this true?" he demanded of the unmasked bandit.

The other nodded. "It was to have been my last," he said slowly. "I—I guess it will be."

His mother stroked his face tenderly. "I trust you, Walter," she whispered. "Tell me."

He put his arms around her and

looked questioningly at the sheriff.

"Go ahead," said the Westerner. "We're fifty miles from Pocalla, so you have plenty of time."

"Well, you see," commenced the outlaw, "I was green when I came to this country, and I got in with a bad bunch. Pretty soon, I got to drinking, and when I drank, I gambled, and when I played, I lost money, so that it wasn't very long until I was too deep to even dream of getting out honestly. I wasn't worrying much, though, because I figured I could jump the country when my credit wasn't good any more; but then I got a letter from my mother saying she was coming out to see me and hoping I would be glad to see her. When I read that, I straightened up and came to my senses with a jolt. I had a lot of gambling debts that it was impossible for me to pay, and I knew that if I skipped out my mother would soon know all about it; and I didn't want her to find it out, so I hit upon this method as the quickest way to make good. I held up the train at Fire Peak, but I didn't get enough to pay everything. I thought I would get the rest of it to-night and settle up my debts to-morrow. I didn't expect her for two or three days more."

The passengers, who had listened intently, leaned forward breathlessly. The sheriff surveyed the crowd anxiously for a few moments, then cleared his throat nervously.

"Young man," he said huskily, touching his prisoner on the shoulder, "how much do you need?"

"Six hundred dollars," replied the bandit in surprise.



The Westerner faced the travelers and held up his hand for attention.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he uttered, slowly, "I place my official position in your hands. If I heed this young fellow's story and let him escape at the next curve, will you every one promise never to mention this incident to anyone? I will see that your valuables are returned before he leaves."

There was a surprised silence for a space, then a murmur of assent.

"And, furthermore," continued the sheriff, "I propose that a donation be made to help him get a new start, for his mother's sake. I myself will contribute fifty dollars."

There was a moment's hesitation before any one offered. Wilson, the salesman, was the first to speak.

"I'll make it a hundred," he said.

"And another hundred for me," chimed in an elderly man from the rear; "I had a son once."

"Twenty for me," added another.

"Here, also."

"I'll put in thirty-five."

In a short time, much more than the required amount had been promised. The sheriff carefully returned everything the bandit had taken, less the amounts that had been donated.

"My friends," he said, "you understand, of course, that every one of us has broken the laws of this state in regard to the aiding and abetting of a prisoner's escape; but I, as an officer of this same law, am doubly guilty. Therefore, I beg of you to never, under any circumstances, mention this night's happenings to any person. I believe I can trust you fully, and I

hope that no unpleasant consequences will result to any one. Just a few miles farther there is a steep upgrade where the prisoner can easily drop off while the train is moving. I will now release him."

There was a sudden commotion in the center of the car.

"I wouldn't rush things if I were you," suggested the sharp-eyed man, stepping into the aisle and calmly levelling a gun full at the Westerner's head. "When I travel in the company of train robbers, I prefer that bracelets should be part of their standard equipment. Drop that key."

The passengers sat stunned; but the old lady turned instantly, drew a revolver from her dress, and fired. The little man ducked, and there was a tinkle of glass behind him. Before she could pull the trigger the second time, he shattered her arm with a bullet, and her gun fell at her feet. In a tenth of a second he covered the Westerner again, and advanced upon him.

"I guess I'd better handcuff you," he remarked, skilfully doing so. "I hated to shoot your lady friend, but she was too reckless with that cannon, so I had to use the quickest method."

"That's right; now you three stand here together while I tie you so you can't get separated. Thanks. You may be seated now, and I will return these kind people their donations."

The two men cowered in silence, but the woman nursed her hand and cursed vehemently.

"Keep quiet, madam," he com-



manded. "You played a great game, but you lost, and the less fuss you make, the easier you'll get off. I guess if I hadn't been on the job, you would have made a success of it. That collection idea was a good one; you would have been half way across the continent before these poor dupes

discovered they had been buncoed."

The jewelry salesman arose.

"Say," he cried, "who the deuce are you, anyway?"

"My name is Braddon," returned the little fellow, easily, exposing his badge—"James Braddon. I'm sheriff of this county."

